

INSIDE THE AMERICA FIRST MOVEMENT

By John Roy Carlson

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO WILLKIE?

By Henry F. Pringle

JANUARY 1942

The American Mercury



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Lisbon: City of Vice and Intrigue

Our America: 1942

A Defense of Opera

Pétain: Triumph of a Myth

The Struggle for Power in Labor

Look Up Mary, *A Story*

The People *versus* the Playwrights

Settlers' Grub

Hollywood's Clamor Boys

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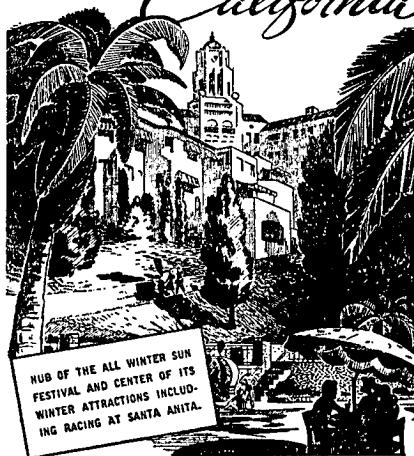
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(Continued on page 117)

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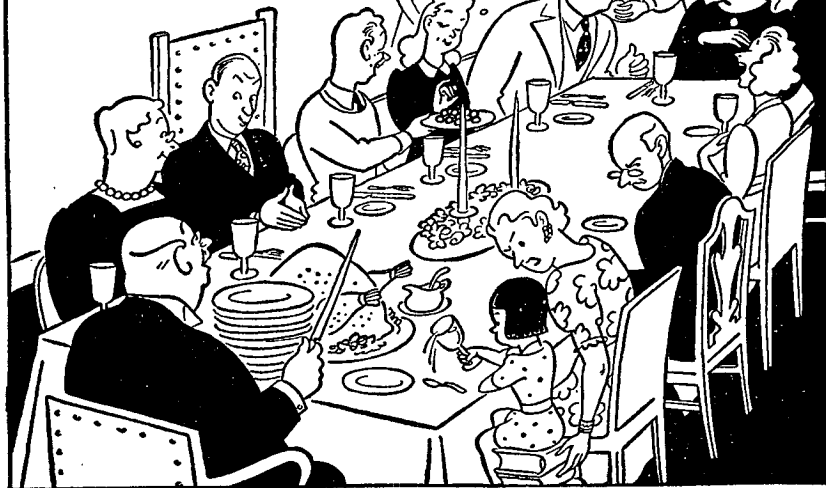
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The American MERCURY

INSIDE THE AMERICA FIRST MOVEMENT

BY JOHN ROY CARLSON

As we go to press, Japan has attacked us. The America First Committee has indicated its support of our war effort, but the sinister, subversive elements which have infiltrated the movement are now more dangerous than ever. Mr. Carlson's analysis of these elements therefore becomes doubly important. — THE EDITORS.

FOR three years I worked as an undercover man in the Nazi-fascist underworld of America.

In those years my feigned zeal as a volunteer worker in endless campaigns and mass meetings and secret sessions made me useful to the assorted pro-Nazi, hate-mongering groups in which I became active. I have been a card-bearing member of eleven pro-fascist organizations. I have been friendly with leaders like Fritz Kuhn, Joseph McWilliams, James True and on terms of comradely intimacy with countless rank-and-file fanatics, crackpots, Naziesque Americans and outright foreign agents, both native and foreign-born. I have cor-

responded with many of them at great length. I know the set-up from the inside.

"Movement" is the proper word. I am able to attest that the America First Committee is not merely an isolationist organization but the spearhead of an American fascist movement. It grew out of the swamps of the scattered pro-fascist groupings and it is headed for a "manifest destiny" that is frankly and fanatically totalitarian, though it may not come to flower for some years. Many America First leaders will deny this in all sincerity. They are honest isolationists and are greatly disturbed by the character of their associates and their mass

following. A few of them have hopes of cleansing their organization.

But the best of these leaders know in their hearts that America First has been too deeply polluted by the fascist crowd for redemption. Its active local leadership in many places is too firmly in the grip of shrewd pro-Nazi elements. The honest isolationists in the movement are outnumbered already by a coalition of rabid anti-Administration businessmen and industrialists with an overwhelming following of appeasers, Nazis, fascists and sundry enemies of the democratic way of life. Insiders have little doubt that the pro-Nazi components of the movement are gaining the upper hand, and will dominate it in the end.

I am convinced, after close-up observation on the inside, that the central, directive nucleus of the America First Committee — the astute, unnamed strategists operating behind the scenes and manipulating the “front” composed of General Wood and his Committeemen — has in it no more of the democratic spirit than the followers of Joe McWilliams or Father Coughlin. When these men are finally exposed, they will appear as American replicas of the Nazi hierarchy.

The rôle of the behind-the-scene

leaders is to foster a know-nothing, totalitarian mood, and to stab American institutions to the heart when social and political conditions are ripe. They are doing their utmost to expedite that day. Ambitious politicians are being seduced easily to act as stooges for the political movement crystallizing out of the America First organization and its camp-trailers. The next few years are earmarked for a relentless propaganda campaign to channel all discontent and all desperate emotion into one reservoir of revolutionary dynamism. A crucial rôle has been assigned to a resurgent Ku Klux Klan, which is already distributing America First literature along with its own.

Whatever a few leaders may think they are doing, the larger movement, of which their America First Committee is only a focal center, does not so much aim to keep America out of war as to use war, if it comes, and its aftermath as an opportunity for a totalitarian anti-democratic revolution. The technique deliberately used is to stir up social discontent, racial cleavages, and distrust of all democratic government. Consciously or innocently, the known “front” leaders of America First are serving as transmission belts of Nazism. They are corralling tens of thousands of

honest opponents of war into enclosures where they can be more conveniently inoculated with the virus of fascism.

I declare unequivocally that America First today is the voice of American fascism. Nearly all fascist and near-fascist groups here have given their support, openly or secretly, to the movement. The Bund, the Christian Front, the Silver Shirts and a dozen others still maintain a separate existence but their best energies are siphoned into America First.

II

The America First movement — its nature, its future, its dynamic drive — is as misunderstood and *underestimated* here today as was Hitlerism in Germany in its earlier stages. I have seen it from its inception, boiling and seething, desperately seeking a common denominator and the perfect “white man on a horse” to restore “Christian constitutional government.” General George Van Horn Moseley, retired, was being groomed when the Dies Committee exposed him in 1939 as a puppet of Baron Manfred von Killinger and Paquita Louise De Shishmareff, foreign agents. I recall what Joe McWilliams, head of the self-styled Amer-

ican Destiny Party (also known as Christian Mobilizers) once said at a confidential meeting to which I had been admitted:

In a few years we will need a leader who will be like a knight of old — a man in shining armor, a champion of the people, a man who is a mystic, a man that the mob can look up to — but not touch.

“Committee” is a misnomer for America First. It is a nationwide mass movement, organized in a vast network of branches, units, sub-units and neighborhood groups throughout the country. More important, through interlocking leadership and duplicating memberships, it is meshed with a great many other groups. It is much like the communist movement in this respect. The claimed total adherence of America First is fifteen million signed-up members and fellow-travelers in forty-three states of the union. No Third Party — or One-Party — movement could hope for a larger operating base.

Its Board of Directors includes some of the wealthiest industrial magnates. Its directing genius was regarded during the first world war as second in rank only to General Pershing. Its supporters include such distinguished figures as a former under-secretary of state, our former ambassador to Belgium and

the president of the University of Chicago. Its hero was once America's most popular idol. Its support in the Congress of the United States has included, in my judgment, more than one hundred Representatives and 31 Senators known to be in sympathy, openly or clandestinely. It has been endorsed repeatedly by the Reich.

America First is no overnight phenomenon. It has been eight years in the making. Its beginnings were in whirlpools of social discontent, stirred into motion not only by Nazi agents but by old-stock Americans who were convinced that "America needs a Hitler." The story goes back to 1933, the year which saw the inauguration of President Roosevelt and the ascent of Adolf Hitler. The phrase "America First" in its current political sense was first used in August 1934, simultaneously with "Britain First," which later became the slogan of Sir Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists. The name popped up that month as America First, Incorporated, with headquarters in the National Press Building in Washington, and with James True as director. True obtained a patent (No. 2,026,777) of a special nightstick which he called a "kike-killer" — which characterizes him sufficiently.

James True eventually developed into one of the most effective Nazi transmission belters in the country. His weekly *Industrial Control Reports* became a veritable bible for American fascists. His offices became a clearinghouse for anti-democratic, anti-Semitic, pro-German propaganda. He was an intimate friend of William Dudley Pelley, Fritz Kuhn and Joseph McWilliams, and was applauded in *World Service*, bi-weekly bulletin of Dr. Goebbels' overseas propaganda network. His associate, Michael Ahearn, is now active with an "isolationist" group, lobbying in Washington and collaborating closely with the America First Committee.

The ground for fascism in America was expertly plowed by Hitler's propaganda agents and by Nazi-esque Americans, but the effort got nowhere for a time. The failure may be attributed largely to excessive frankness — the "front" organizations made no secret of their Nazism. McWilliams, for instance, until two years ago, spoke publicly at Bund meetings. "I want to do in America what Hitler has done in Germany" was his favorite phrase. The timid and conservative were horrified; the "respectables" were alienated; the "smart money boys" were scared off. Only crack-

pots, fanatics, hoodlums of every breed, gun-toting would-be revolutionists and such men as True and his gang of outspoken Nazis were drawn in. That kind of fascism had no chance whatever to succeed. But the leaders even then knew what they were about. I once criticized the lunatic-fringers to a New York leader of the Christian Front. "We've got to have the bums with us now," he explained. "They are the only guys right now who'll stick out their necks. Their job is to agitate and publicize the movement. After they get the ball rolling, we can throw 'em overboard."

The retreat from open Nazism to the present camouflaged American fascism was gradual, subtle and fairly complete. Subsidies for James True, George Deatherage (führer of the American Nationalist Confederation whose emblem was a red-white-blue swastika), Robert E. Edmondson (*American Vigilante Bulletin*) and similar leaders were gradually reduced and entirely cut off within the past year. The Bund banned the swastika from its meetings and the Hitler salute was shelved. McWilliams no longer permitted the playing of the Nazi "Horst Wessel Lied." Sam Browne belts and military uniforms were put away. The "pogrom boys" were silenced.

Nazi groups changed their names, their officers and even their meeting halls. The Bund organ overhauled its masthead and became *The Free American*. Greater emphasis was placed on "Christian Americanism" and less on the savior-like qualities of Adolf Hitler. Naziesque Americanism became more and more nationalistic, more and more "respectable." As one leader remarked to me: "We must squeeze the American flag until it squeaks."

III

A turning point in the movement came with the emergence, from a totally different direction — a most respectable direction — of the America First Committee. It was born on the Yale University campus, in the spring of 1940. As the romantic story goes, told by the Committee's own publicity department, the founder was a handsome, 24-year-old Yale law student: R. Douglas Stuart, Jr., son of the first vice-president of the Quaker Oats Company. He got twenty classmates to join him. The collegians attracted the attention of Chester Bowles, of Benton and Bowles, Inc., an important advertising agency. Stuart's committee next attracted William R. Castle,

former under-secretary of state and former ambassador to Japan. The circle of influential persons was slowly closed: Philip LaFollette, former governor of Wisconsin; Senator Burton Wheeler of Montana; General Robert E. Wood, chairman of the Sears, Roebuck board; Robert Bliss, of the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency.

Young Stuart thus found himself among experts in promotion, organization and public relations, staunch champions of the *status quo* and ardent enemies of the Administration. Using the Yale group as a convenient front, the astute political minds invited Charles Lindbergh to make the first of his defeatist speeches, on October 30, 1940. After that speech, which prophesied the victory of the totalitarian powers, General Wood took active charge.

The Committee set about organizing the nation, working quietly, mainly through the mails and without the fanfare of mass demonstrations. My first notice of the America First Committee came in a letter postmarked November 11, 1940. It was signed by a well-known fascist of German lineage. A few weeks later, I met unctuous, tongue-in-cheek John Snow, known in democratic circles as the "gentleman fascist." He was di-

rector of the League for Constitutional Government and also sold the notorious anti-Semitic forgery, *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*. He gave me copies of General Wood's Chicago speech and at my request mailed me ten additional copies.

But the Committee was regarded as highbrow by the "rabble" fascists. Because an American Jew, Lessing J. Rosenwald, was on the National Board, pro-fascist haranguers for a time denounced the Committee as subsidized by Jews. To placate this element and direct their energy, the No Foreign War Committee was set up for them in the fall of 1940, with Verne Marshall, editor of the Cedar Rapids (Iowa) *Gazette*, as leader. According to Marshall himself, he was invited to a dinner at the University Club in New York by Merwin K. Hart, a friend of James True. Also present were George T. Eggleston, editor of *Scribner's Commentator*, leading organ of appeasement, and Lindbergh. Marshall claimed that it was Lindbergh who finally persuaded him to accept the chairmanship.

Marshall's mission was to whip up the emotions of the extremist groups, mobilizing their support under a single leadership. A promoter and a clever exhibitionist,

the Iowan spotlighted national attention on the isolationist issue. He performed his task so well, so endeared himself to Nazi-fascists that he put the parallel America First movement in jeopardy. Lindbergh, who had selected him, denounced him as an anti-Semite, and with good reason: Marshall's advisors were Charles W. Hudson, publisher of *America In Danger*, and Colonel E. N. Sanctuary, both veteran crusaders in the cause of racial persecution, both intimate friends of General Moseley and openly pro-fascist.

After a three-month barnstorming tour, Marshall was urged to resign and did so. I visited his New York offices just before they closed and asked for copies of the organization's literature. The stack I was given contained the standard material distributed at Bund and Christian Front meetings. The No Foreign War Committee convinced me that any anti-war crusade which accepted the multitude of Bundists, Coughlinites and fascists in general for support, would inevitably turn anti-democratic, Nazi-esque, and serve Hitler's interests rather than our own.

By March 1941, the No Foreign War Committee was virtually extinct. Its sole heir was the America First Committee, by this time be-

ginning to operate as a mass enterprise on an ever broader popular base.

Much of Marshall's personnel and his entire mailing list of sincere isolationists, sundry appeasers, pro-Nazis, etc., had been safely transferred to the offices of America First throughout the country. The America Firsters by that time had set up shop at 49 East 53rd Street, in New York City. Flocks of sincere isolationists at once signed up, assuming that here at last was a respectable anti-war organization not dedicated to the transmission of Hitlerism. But the pro-fascists who had rallied around Verne Marshall also joined in droves. Once inside, these elements grew in strength, if only because they worked with fanatic enthusiasm. Soon they became the organization's backbone.

In filling out my own application as volunteer worker in America First, I wrote down my membership in a notorious pro-Nazi organization. I purposely called attention to it to see what the reaction would be. There was none. When I asked the America Firster who accepted my application if he was familiar with this organization and its Nazi-minded leader, the answer was a silent, smiling nod. I was accepted as a volunteer worker for America First — my "fascist record" not-

withstanding — just as I had been accepted on the No Foreign War Committee.

IV

General Wood and his staff of expert organizers, promoters and propagandists marshalled some of our best-known citizens. The roster began to glitter with big names: Lindbergh and Rickenbacker; Senators Wheeler, Nye and Reynolds; Congressmen Fish, Short and Day; Archbishop Beckman and Father Curran; Authors Irvin S. Cobb and Kathleen Norris; Industrialists Jay C. Hormel, Sterling Morton and Ernest T. Weir. Some served the movement's purposes knowingly. Others — the Rev. John Haynes Holmes, the Rev. Harry Emerson Fosdick, Robert E. Hutchins, Lillian Gish, etc. — were clearly innocent, sincere isolationists who gave their support to a movement which is still able to camouflage its true character.

John T. Flynn, chairman of the Manhattan Chapter, more than any other America Firster I know, has tried to weed out the fascist elements. He denounced the support of the Bund. He denounced Joseph McWilliams before an audience of 22,000 in Madison Square Garden. He made many enemies on both

counts. Father Coughlin turned on him furiously. But Flynn has been consistently outvoted and America First's ranks remain wide open to the Christian Front and similar groups. Flynn would be the first to admit that he has no jurisdiction over outlying chapters of the Committee. Being more or less autonomous, these can either dignify or corrupt the Committee. The evidence points overwhelmingly to corruption by the Nazi-fascist elements which have infiltrated the Committee and are gradually taking control.

An impressive example of the manner in which autonomous chapters can take on a sinister character as they are captured by Nazi-fascist elements is provided by the America First movement in California. Fortunately, that section has been submitted to a pitiless study by the Americanism Committee of the American Legion of Los Angeles, which became convinced that "the striking similarity between Nazi propaganda technique and America First methods of operation can be no mere coincidence."

The Legion report shows how the German-American Bund, under the pressure of public opinion, went underground, and how above ground the Bundists proceeded to

utilize more respectable channels, especially anti-war and isolationist organizations. Then follows a categorical listing of the activities of known pro-Nazi propagandists in the ranks of America First. It is a most instructive compilation, as these samples should suffice to prove.

F. K. FERENZ: "Distributor of subversive books, exhibitor of Nazi films, publisher of a swastika-decorated volume of essays entitled *Hitler*, attended twenty-one America First meetings between March 6 and August 23, 1941." He helped prepare posters and banners and participated in the motor parades of the America First Committee.

JOHN L. RIEMER: who testified that "a German consulate had paid \$215 for printing part of the literature he had been sending from Los Angeles," has extensively advertised America First in connection with his mailings of Nazi propaganda.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN BULLARD: "Organizer of the American Guards, sponsoring Hitler-style abolition of labor unions, distributor of Nazi propaganda, regular attendant at meetings of the League to Save America First . . . chairman of the downtown chapter of the America First Committee. His talks to America First meetings are outspokenly anti-Semitic."

T. W. HUGHES: "who founded the Bund-reinforced League to Save America First, conducts meetings largely directed to inciting intolerance and class dissensions." He wrote *The Truth About England*, distributed at the Aryan Bookstore and also sold at America First meetings. Many Amer-

ica First speakers originally spoke for Hughes' League. Verne Marshall has also spoken for it.

MRS. FAITH McCULLOUGH, alias Mrs. Frances Waxey, former secretary to the German agent, Paquita Louise De Shishmareff, is active in the Pasadena and Glendale chapters. Her close associate, William Hunt, is chairman of the Glendale chapter.

JAMES McBRIDE: "Bund Stormtrooper and his wife, a Deutches Haus waitress, have attended twenty-three America First meetings within the last few months."

BRUCE TARKINGTON DOWDEN: "co-operates with F. K. Ferenz, and advocates 'whispering campaigns' to slur the morals of teachers who support defense programs." He has spoken at least four times at America First meetings.

The American Legion report concluded: "There is every indication that they have joined the America First movement for the express purpose of presenting their subversive propaganda to those sincere isolationists who have been attracted to meetings of America First." An ironical touch is added to the California picture by indications that the local communists and communist fellow-travelers, in their period of fervid isolationism which ended abruptly on June 22, 1941, made attempts at "united fronts" with Nazi-infested America First groups. It should be noted for the record, too, that the communist press, which remained silent about

America First and on occasion reported its speeches sympathetically, began vehement exposés of the organization immediately after Hitler attacked Stalin.

V

The subversive penetration of America First in California is decidedly not a local phenomenon. Similar situations in other centers have not been detailed for the delectation of the public only because thorough investigations have not yet been completed.

Donald Shea, leader of the National Gentile League and a veteran pro-Nazi, arriving in Chicago to address America First, also talked at secret meetings of lunatic-fringe groups. Shea spoke before America First rallies also in Cincinnati and Indianapolis. It was in Chicago that the German-American Alliance, a Bundist-type organization, urged its members to "assist them [America First] financially and morally." They did — and General Wood has not repudiated this support.

In Detroit and Philadelphia, the Reverend Gerald L. K. Smith has spoken at tumultuous rallies of the Committee. Smith is a former member of Pelley's Silver Shirt Legion, a militarist organization based on the Nazi model. Smith also was

an associate of Huey Long and has collaborated with Father Coughlin. In New Rochelle, New York, William J. Baxter, propagandist for the Japanese and a political associate of Father Coughlin, heads the America First chapter. At Peekskill, New York, the Reverend John Cole McKim, columnist for a Japanese propaganda weekly which is registered with the State Department, heads the America First chapter.

In New York City I am on most familiar ground. I can affirm from intimate knowledge that here the mass following of America First is probably even more dangerous than in Los Angeles. A prominent official described it as "80 per cent Coughlinite." This is true, if we interpret the term loosely to cover a variety of pro-Nazi groups parading shamelessly under labels like Christian Front, Christian Mobilizers, Paul Revere Sentinels, etc. In years of close association with them, I have learned to recognize hundreds of fascist-minded New Yorkers. Attending America First meetings, as far as I am concerned, is like going to the familiar Bund or Mobilizers meetings. I see the same faces, the same fanaticism, and the same contempt for democracy, the Administration, Great Britain — and also the same clamor for a

“new leadership” and a “new order” in the United States.

For instance, there is the first Lindbergh rally which I attended at Manhattan Center on April 23, 1941. The hall overflowed with American flags, and in addition the eight thousand persons who packed the hall waved small American flags. It was the wildest display of super-patriotic nationalism I had ever seen in New York, and in other respects recalled the spirit of the Nuremberg rallies. The steaming, raucous mob behaved in typical “Christian Front” fashion, interrupting speakers with cries of “Jew,” and cheering wildly every pot-shot at the democracies, every forecast of Nazi victory.

I counted representatives of sixteen subversive organizations in the hall. The roster included my “best friends.” I recognized August Klapprott and Gustave Elmer, New York chieftains of the Bund; Gentleman John Snow; George A. Van Nosedall, who as führer of the Crusaders for Americanism, Inc., used to give the Hitler salute during the playing of our national anthem; Lawrence Dennis, who readily admits to being the country’s outstanding intellectual fascist; Edward James Smythe, liaison man between the Klan and the Bund; etc. The invocation was delivered

by the Reverend Edward A. Hunt. Next day, I visited his home, where I talked for more than an hour to him and his wife. I have documents in my private files identifying both of them with a number of ardent pro-fascists.

I have heard rank treason committed at countless meetings of the Christian Front, the Bund and the Christian Mobilizers. I have seen uniformed Bund troopers marching in military formation, yelling a lusty “*Sieg, heil*,” amidst swastika flags. I have heard the “Horst Wessel Lied” of blood and vengeance echoing through New York halls and have watched Joe McWilliams and Fritz Kuhn pledging mutual support. But on October 17, 1941, I witnessed a meeting that exceeded them all — because I saw the same stormtroopers, the same fanatic mob, only this time posing as America First patriots! This meeting took place in Ebling’s Casino and was reported in a few paragraphs in next day’s papers: just a routine America First rally. Those reports did not indicate what I knew about the audience, and that is the essence of the story. All the dregs of New York’s fascist lunatic fringe were there. The Christian Front was out in full force. It distributed leaflets signed by Jack Cassidy, ringleader of the “Sports

Club," seventeen members of which had been arrested by the Department of Justice. Cassidy urged the election to the City Council of one John H. Henihan, a Christian Fronter, and he urged one Thomas J. Goodwin for mayor of New York. I interviewed Mr. Goodwin at the Murray Hill Hotel. "There's nothing wrong with fascism," he told me. "Hitler has done a good job in Europe."

Among others present at the Casino that day were Benno Eibach, busy selling *Social Justice*. He had sold out all his copies of the *Deutscher Weckruf und Beobachter*, the Bund's weekly newspaper. Chief New Moon, alias Thomas Dixon, who was once arrested with Fritz Kuhn, was distributing leaflets. My hand soon tired of waving at those I knew or had met at subversive meetings.

I could write many pages about the fascists I know who are active in the various America First branches. I got my first public notice to join America First at a Christian Front meeting in Brooklyn staged for the benefit of those seventeen men arrested in a fantastic alleged plot to overthrow our government. Thomas Kennedy passed out membership cards. Kennedy, a member of the Front in its heyday, is at this writing employed in the main

New York headquarters of the America First Committee at 515 Madison Avenue.

I know that the Christian Mobilizers have postponed at least one regular meeting to attend an America First rally. I know that F. Guy Juenemann, a spy once engaged in the service of True and Deatherage, was engaged by John Flynn "to gather evidence" against the "war-mongering" movie industry and that he turned over the "evidence" to America First and Senator Nye. I could tell of the leaflets distributed by the 47th Street branch of America First bearing the imprint of the Russian-American National Committee. The director of this Committee is Boris Brasol, the first to introduce the *Protocols* in the United States, and a Nazi propagandist. I could cite dozens of instances linking the America First following with the worst totalitarian elements in America.

But it is needless. General Wood himself has bowed to Father Coughlin, spokesman for the corporate state as a substitute for democracy. Note the General's letter, as published in *Social Justice*:

Replying to your letter of July 5th, I have not rejected the Christian Social Justice movement. I welcome their support in our common objective —

preventing this country from getting into the war.

VI

What about the leadership of the America First movement? Here we find a paradox which is ominously reminiscent of Germany. It is the paradox of Fritz Thyssen and Goebbels — entrenched wealth and revolutionary ardor — in one camp.

The America First leadership includes men who justly count themselves bulwarks of the *status quo*, pillars of capitalist society. The thing they fear most is change, any kind of change, and it is the potential threat of an overturn in the established social order which gives them nightmares. Yet the growing roster of their America First membership includes hordes of the fascist-minded, determined to overthrow the present social order of political democracy and private business. The comi-tragedy of the America First movement, as of Hitlerism in its early years, is that the larger part of its leadership most fears what some leaders and the most dynamic element in the following most desire: an overhauling of the social and political order.

It is inevitable that at the present rate, as the paradox sharpens, the hierarchy will soon prove itself

unable to control its mass following. The mob will have its way and it will be hell-bent for civil war, however the process may be disguised with slogans about "constitutional methods." Those fascists with whom I associated always stressed "constitutional" procedures, invariably adding that when such methods fail, a resort to "bullets instead of ballots" will become the birthright of "every red-blooded American."

A few months ago an *Emergency Bulletin No. 1* was sent out, attached to a letter from General Wood. The bulletin outlined a plan which showed clearly that it had been conceived by a military strategist, possibly General Wood or General Thomas Hammond, also a member of the national committee. This semi-secret bulletin — sent only to chapter heads — commissioned key workers as "Generals." It stated:

Each General's assignment is to get ten "colonels" who, in turn, will get ten "captains" who, in turn, will get ten "lieutenants." Under this plan of action, you or the mail marshall appointed by you, should be able to phone each General, each General in turn, his or her ten Colonels, each colonel his or her ten captains, and each captain his or her ten lieutenants, all in one day's time.

Bear in mind none of these letter writers are just to write letters. They are to follow instructions . . . Na-

tional headquarters will decide when, to whom and, in general, what to write and notify the state and chapter chairman.

These military techniques have a familiar ring to anyone who has followed the rise of fascist movements in Europe.

Although the America First leadership is predominantly Protestant, it has enlisted the support of a considerable number of American Catholics. For instance, William T. Leonard, chairman of the important Brooklyn chapter, is also president of the Catholic Laymen's Committee for Peace. Among the rank-and-file, especially in the great population centers, Americans of German, Italian and Irish descent are exceedingly in evidence. This is not difficult to understand, considering the historic Irish animosity to Britain and the cultural and racial call of the Axis lands on a portion of their American sons. Their number in the America First movement is augmented by Ukrainian and White Russian elements.

Members are under constant barrages of propaganda. An extensive variety of literature, expensively printed in color, is sent out free or at a nominal charge to all chapter heads. The radio is used liberally. During the summer months of 1941, hordes of speakers addressed

audiences at street corners. The fires are fed by the monthly *Scribner's Commentator* and numerous other isolationist publications.

The effort is being made to organize virtually every "100 per cent American" except children in the kindergarten grades. The Youth Division of America First aims at youth from 16 to 23 years of age. There is a division, Colleges for America First, which already has representation on dozens of campuses. In addition, the College Committee for Defense First, in New York, functions independently but is an integral part of the movement. It recently sponsored a month's tour of colleges in the East for Senator Nye. There is also a Women's Division of America First. Women United and Women Determined, in addition to the Women's Division, are all active as propagandists in New York. America First collaborates with other "isolationist" women's groups. One of these, the Women's National Committee to Keep the United States Out of War, located in Washington, is directed by Catherine Curtis, whose office manager is Michael Ahearne, a former associate of James True.

A highly raucous group collaborating with America First is the Mothers of the USA, and affil-

iated mothers' groups. They are in general a Coughlinite specie. First marshalled through the pages of *Social Justice*, they soon spread in a wide network over the country, taking on such names as the National Legion of Mothers, Mothers of American Sons, and Mothers of America. I was with them during the famous "Mothers' March" to Washington, staged to protest against the passage of the Lend-Lease Bill. The rank-and-file mothers — many of them kindly, submissive, politically innocent — are among the most prized instruments of the conniving fascist leaders behind the "front" names.

Obviously the movement couldn't operate one month on the nickel-and-dime contributions of most of its members. It maintains a large paid staff of employes throughout the country. Many of its top-notch speakers are paid. It is certain that the real contributions which keep the machinery going are supplied by those most seriously interested in the future of the movement.

Ernest T. Weir is known to have given heavily. Thomas N. McCarter, former chairman of the Public Service Corporation of New Jersey, is another heavy donor. H. L. Stuart, president of the leading investment house in the mid-west, is a financial supporter and so

is Sterling Morton. The wealthy meat packer Jay C. Hormel has given liberally, as have Mrs. Janet Ayer Fairbanks and Max Wellington Babb, president of Allis-Chalmers. A glance at this list makes it apparent that the movement is backed by a small clique of industrialists and big businessmen. Every one of them has bitterly opposed New Deal policies. Roosevelt-hate has been one of the most powerful forces which has impelled the America First movement.

Beneath the official purposes — "to keep America out of foreign wars" and defense against invasion — are the deeper impulses of the mass which has flocked to the Committee's standard. A revealing interpretation of policy came from Miss Isobel French, chairman of the Washington, D. C. chapter. "We of America First" she said, "believe that you can come to an understanding and do business with Hitler. The interventionists think you can't come to an understanding and do business with Hitler."

Yet America Firsters shun the term appeasement and protest against being called pacifists. They like best the term "isolationist." That isolationism may be defined by their own declarations. Lindbergh has gone on record time and

again for a "negotiated peace" and an "understanding" with Germany. Senator Wheeler was one of the first to come out for a "peaceful settlement" of Hitler's war against democracy. Senator Robert R. Reynolds saw "no reason for breaking off relations with Germany . . . Hitler is looking after his own people and that is what we should be doing here . . . the democracies are the real aggressors and not the dictatorships."

Speaking to a prominent official of America First, I asked how we could best serve the current needs of the United States. "By negotiating an immediate peace with Germany and putting an end to this war," the answer came back, unhesitatingly. To one who has studied the America First movement at first hand and experienced intimately the process by which it built up its membership, the policy of appeasing Hitler seems to be a major, if not *the* major long-term objective.

What is the program of the America First movement for the future? The answer is not too mysterious to anyone who has followed the movement seriously. You will find it in Verne Marshall's declaration, at a meeting of the League to Save America First, in Los Angeles:

We must stick together, for a leader will arise at the opportune moment, who will unite people who think as you and I do: who shall impose the will of the people upon the Washington administration.

The entire movement has been clamoring for "a new leadership." In 1936, Pelley (running on a platform of "For Christ and Constitution") called on "every Gentile to form with me an overwhelming juggernaut. . . . The time has come for an American Hitler and a pogrom." George Deatherage called for "constitutional fascism." Followers and sympathizers of such men are strongly entrenched in the America First movement. Their sentiments, I am convinced, are the sentiments of the bulk of America First's following.

VII

The main impetus comes from the emotionalized mass movement. It is stimulating the political glands of power-hungry and vengeful Roosevelt-hating men throughout the country. Speaking recently to a clergyman who has taken a prominent part in America First rallies, I asked where the present course of the Committee would lead it. "We will surely have a Third Party," he told me. "It will be a Christian party. It will be an American party.

Its slogan will be America First. We are organized in every part of the country. One year before the next Presidential election, we will swing into action. We will have nothing to do with the Republican or Democratic parties."

On October 27, 1941, the New York *Daily News* declared the need for an America First Party. A few weeks later, plans for the formation of an American Party became known: The first hint had come from Philip LaFollette, speaking in Indianapolis on November 8: "There are still two parties in the country, the War Party and the American Party." A big step toward organization was the secession of the Indiana Chapter of America First from the parent outfit. It set itself up as an independent state organization, not responsible to the national body. Merle H. Miller, chairman of the chapter, was elected permanent state chairman. Farmer-Labor strength in Minnesota and Progressive strength in Wisconsin are now being pooled, with isolationism as the common element and with Philip LaFollette in the directing rôle. Philip has been an America First tub-thumper since the beginning.

That the America First groups have political aspirations is apparent. The ultimate form these

aspirations will take is a matter for speculation. The movement achieved respectability, strong financial backing and promotional and organizational acumen only eighteen months ago. Politically it is still in its infancy, but it has already demonstrated itself to be a national headache. It has made an unsuccessful attempt to keep its skirts clean of the fascist rabble which has fastened itself to the main body. That it will be unable to shake off this element is obvious.

On December 2 General Wood outlined what the press described as "a reorganization plan transforming the America First Committee into an active political agency in the pattern of major political parties." "We may have to dissolve the present corporation," the General said, "and reorganize along political party lines." Though he disclaimed third-party intentions, the movement is clearly stronger than Wood and the other ostensible leaders. The fascist-Nazi revolutionary impetus will sweep them along helplessly in its own know-nothing direction.

For the present, aside from the preliminary skirmishes of the American Party, the Committee is attempting to bring into line Congressmen who are opposed to the principles of America First.

The Committee is still feeling its way around, sounding sentiment, consolidating its support.

The dream of the rank-and-file that Lindbergh will one day be President of the United States amounts to an adoration of the flier. It is promoted assiduously. The *Deutsche Weckruf* has declared: "A new man on a horse has arisen." Pelley's *Roll Call* runs banner headlines: "Lindbergh, Ford, Moseley, Wheeler, New U. S. Leaders." *Publicity*, an avowed anti-democracy, anti-Semitic organ published in Kansas, screams: "Lindbergh would prove a 'Moses' in 1944 to lead this nation out of a political wilderness."

One of the most dangerous aspects of the movement is in its encouragement to older groups. The resurgent Ku Klux Klan is on its program. The Klan has launched an "Americanization program" with one million dollars as its goal. Senator C. Wayland Brooks, a prized America First sympathizer, participated recently in a gigantic rally at Rockford, Illinois, at which fifty thousand persons are reported to have been present. A member of the Klan, who also has worked actively for the Bund, wrote to me in November 1941: "The unit you want to watch is the Klan. . . . We will take over the

America First Committee before this time next year, you can rest assured."

Of course I don't believe it will do anything of the kind ever — at least under the Klan name. But the boast is symptomatic. Forces akin to it are seeking power and the Klan is being cleverly channeled to serve the larger cause of the America First movement. It's part of the jigsaw puzzle. It fits into the Third Party feelers, the American Destiny talk, the Lindbergh and Wheeler demands for "new leadership." Pieces of the puzzle are easily picked up on the pages of *Social Justice*; consider this, editorially, on September 1, 1941:

We predict an attempt to establish a National-Socialist Party in America with emphasis on the word "nationalist" . . . The Marxist democrats, turned militaristic, will obstruct the formation of this party . . . We predict that if such happens, the National-Socialists in America — organized under that or some other name — eventually will take control of government on this continent . . . We predict, lastly, the end of democracy in America.

The strong following of the Fundamentalist preacher, the Reverend Gerald B. Winrod, in Kansas, also is playing into the hands of the America First Committee.

The current Nazi-fascist propa-

ganda drive for impeachment of the President — echoed lustily at every America First meeting — is a device to keep the pot boiling. It plays directly to the “rabble” element and obviously dovetails into the Nazi plans to conquer us from within. All of these things are heading us towards a fundamental split of the American people. The American Legion report told a simple truth when it declared:

While carefully avoiding giving any hint of a consistent defense policy for this country, many America First speakers apparently stop at nothing that will further confuse the defense issue, weaken our morale, or otherwise embarrass our government. . . . In meetings of America First, processes are at work whereby a person attending merely to seek information, may unwittingly be transformed into a Nazi sympathizer, and even into a potential traitor to his country.

Knowing and unknowing, hordes of fascist-minded Americans now in process of conversion, are integral to the America First movement. They constitute tributaries which will go to feed the main artery.

Let me recapitulate. This is what every sincere American, and particularly those who are honestly isolationist, ought to know about America First:

The organization has batted on the support of essentially sub-

versive and un-American elements. The honest leaders and followers are outshouted, if not yet outnumbered, by open or disguised pro-fascists. Behind the “big name” front of innocent or indifferent leaders are those who manipulate the mass following. All the large and small streams of totalitarian emotion in dozens of fascist-type organizations are being channeled into America First. If the organization undertook the task immediately, energetically and honestly, it could still conceivably dam that flood of support. But it isn't trying — because the power of the organization and the inflamed political ambitions of some valuable supporters rest on the very elements who would be excluded.

America First, I repeat, is today the voice of American fascism. Here, as in pre-Hitler Germany, the preparations thrive on public indifference and hush-hush tactics by those who might do something to stem the tide. Come with me to America First meetings, listen to the speakers, and after the rallies talk with some of the chapter officials. See with me the burning fanaticism, the galling hatreds etched in the faces of frustrated men and women — and you will agree that America First is playing with dynamite.



Forward To Victory!

► *He yearned for surrender in World War I — and achieved it in 1940.*

PÉTAIN: TRIUMPH OF A MYTH

BY HENRY TORRÈS

A WHOLE country with faith in one man . . . a man who had no faith in his country. These are primary elements in one of history's most tragic dramas.

For more than twenty years Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain had been a living legend.

A full professor in the Military Staff College at the age of forty-one, Pétain's promotion was held up because his heretical defensive views undermined the doctrine of offensive action advocated by the French General Staff. In August 1914, though past his fifty-eighth year, he was only a colonel threatened with old-age retirement. At the beginning of the war he led a brigade of six thousand men; at the end of the war he commanded an army of three million soldiers. Having distinguished himself as commander of a division at the Marne, of an army corps in Artois and an army in Champagne, on February 21, 1916, he was given the task of stopping the formidable German offensive at Verdun. He checked the enemy and won world fame as

the savior of his country. In the spring of 1917, General Nivelle succeeded Joffre. After the failure of his reckless offensive, Pétain was appointed generalissimo.

Aroused by the heavy and futile losses resulting from inadequate preparations, the soldiers were full of resentment and disillusion. Here and there the spectre of mutiny raised its terrifying head. Less severe in his acts than in his words, less impatient to repress outbreaks than to prevent them, moderate despite his rigor, Pétain won his most difficult victory over his own excited troops. The temper of the men calmed down; their morale was strengthened. The army regained its discipline and the country rallied around the army.

Ultimately it was Foch who played the decisive part in winning the war because of his energy, his swift intelligence, his prodigious gift for large scale maneuvering, his ability to overcome material difficulties and his infectious faith in himself, his soldiers and the eventual triumph of France. With

Clemenceau, he was the great artisan of victory. Yet it was the picture of Pétain that the demobilized heroes of Verdun cut out of the popular magazines. They wished to keep before them the image of his handsome face, so typically French, with its firm contour and marble pallor, its high forehead and imperious chin, its severe lips surmounted by the familiar mustache, and its clear gray eyes, more meditative than authoritative. The veterans liked to remember his noble bearing, his resolute but flexible gait, his gracious gestures and the soldierly pride which lent a natural solemnity to everything he did.

It was rumored that many amorous successes had marked his military career and sweetened his monotonous soldier's life. In France, such a reputation is always useful, and is regarded as complementary to the qualities necessary in a military leader. It was also said that his sense of humor, moderated in public by his austere reserve, expanded among his intimates with Rabelaisian vitality. Faithful to another national tradition, he liked good food and good wine, which in France is interpreted as the mark of a generous nature.

Essentially — and this was a dominant element in his prestige —

he is a French peasant. He has the French peasant's caution, reflectiveness, diligence and that slowness which is the economy of strength. And he was not an uprooted, transplanted peasant. He kept contact with the soil and his soldiers knew that he was able to discuss the most obscure questions of agricultural technique with agronomists, and the little problems of everyday life in the fields with farmhands.

Successive attacks on Pétain by Joffre, Foch, Clemenceau and Poincaré were published by academic editors and discussed in narrow circles. They did not weaken his prestige nor alter the instinctive gratitude felt for him by the immense family of war veterans. His name was to them inseparable from the great name of Verdun, from "that great duel before the whole universe, that unique and almost symbolic combat in the lists where he was the champion of France." Posthumous accusations made against him in the memoirs of these great shadows and the resulting polemics left the people indifferent.

In his *Mémoires*, written with characteristic bluntness and lack of bitterness, Joffre reveals that as early as April 1916, Pétain's tendency "to accept the will of the enemy" induced the Marshal, then

generalissimo, "to find some way of removing him from the battlefield of Verdun." Joffre writes:

At that very moment, the post of commandant of the army of the center became vacant. This was an occasion both to recognize the merits of General Pétain by a promotion and to accomplish his removal from Verdun, which seemed to me necessary. . . . During a field tour of the second army which I made with Pétain in July 1916, I was struck by his pessimism, and this impression was shortly afterwards confirmed to me by others. . . . As early as June, Foch's firm attitude during his visit to General Headquarters had calmed the excessive fears which Pétain had raised. The latter's confidence in the possible duration of resistance at Verdun was very limited.

Poincaré records in his memoirs that later, in 1918, Joffre made the following statement to one of the ministers: "I can see that Pétain has once again committed the same mistakes as when he demanded the surrender of Verdun to the enemy. As a matter of fact, the present situation can be saved if we seriously want to save it." And he writes further:

Loucheur, the energetic and clear-sighted Minister for Armaments, is most dissatisfied with Pétain, whom he regards as a dyed-in-the-wool defeatist, and who said to him only a few days ago: "We should initiate peace negotiations." When the Minister repeated these words to Foch, he replied: "To ask for peace now would be madness."

"Foch," explains Poincaré in

another passage, "says that Pétain lacks character. He notes that his relations with Pétain are good, and that in a secondary role, such as transmitter of orders, he would be perfect. But his fear of responsibility disqualifies him for the post of commander-in-chief."

As for Clemenceau, at the very moment when, in November 1917, he was forming what was to be the Cabinet of Victory, he spoke of Pétain to the President of the Republic, judging him, says Poincaré, with sympathetic clear-sightedness: "He is the best of our leaders, though full of bias resulting from complacency and long association with old comrades. His ideas are somewhat false; from time to time he indulges in regrettable expressions of pessimism and discouragement."

On December 13, 1917, speaking before the War Committee, the Tiger exclaimed: "General Pétain is under my orders. I must assume responsibility for everything he does, and I insist that he know it." Six days later he said to Poincaré: "Another of my worries is Pétain. Things aren't going so well and Pétain is too negative, too timid. Did you hear him the other day? We asked him: 'Will you hold out?' He did not say: 'I will hold out under such and such condi-

tions.' He said: 'I won't hold out unless . . .' The whole man is in those words." In the midst of the gravest danger that ever threatened the Allies, in March 1918, Clemenceau complained of Pétain's "exaggerated pessimism."

In June 1918, at another crucial hour, he told the President of the Republic: "Pétain is most provoking in his pessimism. Can you imagine, he told me, for example, that the Germans will beat the British in the field and that later the Boches will submerge us. Has a general the right to say such things or even to think them?" In Doullens, the intrepid Jacobin confided to his secretary, Jean Martet: "I had the choice between two men. One kept telling me that we were done for, the other walked back and forth like a madman, spoiling for the fight. I said to myself: 'Let's try Foch, at least with him we'll die with a rifle in our hands.'"

II

The evidence of those who knew Pétain best, in action under stress, adds up to an indictment of the man as defeatist, pessimistic, lacking in faith. But when has fact sufficed to slay illusion? Even after the testimony of Clemenceau, Joffre, Foch and others had been

made public and argued over, 20 of fashionable Paris applauded the poet, Paul Valéry, on January 22 1931, when he welcomed Marshal Pétain into the French Academy. Sparing him the customary unpleasant remarks which he reserved for Foch, M. Valéry addressed Pétain as follows:

Even when you inspired everyone with a confidence that no other leader had given, even when everything depended upon you, and your presence alone reassured the army, the government, the nation, the high command and the allies, you, Monsieur, too lucid a witness of the formidable efforts of the enemy, of the losses and incredible ordeals of our troops, never certain to the last minute that you would not have to give way, you refused until the very end to boast of victory.

Thus Paul Valéry interpreted the facts supplied by the most direct and best qualified of witnesses! Congenital defeatism was converted into the high virtues of modesty and restraint!

But the French people did not know or did not care to know all the facts, conclusive as they might be. Every veteran of Verdun — and through the constant reinforcement of that battlefield almost the whole French army was at Verdun — had fixed on Pétain as the embodiment of the collective glory in which each claimed his part. Every veteran remembered

that the Marshal had been as thrifty of French blood during the battle as in the repression of the mutinies.

In the French mind, Pétain came to represent the opposite of generals so bold as to be wasteful of human lives, or so eager for a brilliant *communiqué* as to drive their soldiers into costly adventures. In the depths of the nation, the myth grew up of one general, serene and wise, exact and just, expert and thoughtful, yet victorious in the end. By a strange historical about face, it was this myth that supplied an alibi for capitulation in 1940.

Following the victory of 1918, Pétain was appointed Vice-President of the Supreme War Council: in other words, he was retained as commander-in-chief in the event of a new conflict. The General Staff was thus placed under his authority. On February 18, 1922, a decree initiated by Maginot extended his powers; in addition to his post with the War Council, he was made Inspector General of the Army.

It took him nine years to perfect the defense plan which culminated in the Maginot Line. The credits for this project were voted by the Chamber in one session. But in the interval, the Marshal's latent popularity was revived by his successes in the difficult Riff campaign,

which he himself summarized upon his return to Paris in a deliberately modest statement on November 8, 1925: "From now on, Morocco will be quiet. Abd-el-Krim is no longer to be feared. My military task has been accomplished. I leave the rest to politics." In his sulking retreat, constantly haunted by an implacable foreboding of German revenge, Clemenceau did not fall dupe to the Marshal's calculated calm. His faithful Jean Martet has recorded the Tiger's words:

In this post-war period, while Germany is preparing, what is the French army doing? It is disarming. The High Command has apparently abdicated. Even in the face of constant violations of the Treaty of Versailles, no general has risked a protest. The age limit for our generals used to be 61. It has been extended to 62, 66 and finally to 70. Some day our country will pay dearly for this.

Clemenceau had provided in advance the answer to Pétain when the Marshal, on June 20, 1940, broadcast an indictment of the government and the nation. Said Pétain on that dismal day: "We tried to spare ourselves the necessary effort; today we have met with disaster." In the consummation he forgot, and many Frenchmen with him, that he had been the architect of that disaster. Pétain's and his General Staff's efforts between 1921 and 1931 had been

squandered on technical controversies which still remain unresolved. He was voted all the funds he asked for; he forged the defense weapon and he must be judged by the quality of that weapon.

In 1931, Pétain resigned from his two positions of Vice-President of the Supreme War Council and Inspector General of the Army, which were taken over by Weygand, and became Inspector General of Air Defense for the Territories. He accepted this relatively modest post without apparent bitterness and with a simple readiness to serve which fitted in with his legend. But judging by the results, he does not seem to have advanced the defense of his country in his new post. Not even his most eulogistic biographies, the dithyrambs devoted to him after his accession to power by General Lauré, General Audet, and Lieutenant-Colonels Montjean and Buot de l'Epine, record one significant decision, one vigorous reform, one energetic action directed toward galvanizing French air defenses and organizing an effective air force. Instead of the cry of alarm that would have carried tremendous weight from him, his staff wasted time on preparatory surveys, organizing committees, terminology, arguments as to the

competence of certain persons and personal rivalries. He gave no leadership to his department.

In 1934, upon the insistence of Weygand, Pétain accepted the post of Minister of War in Doumergue's cabinet, constituted after the fascist outbreaks of February 6. He declared in a statement to the press, carefully weighing his words to produce the maximum effect: "The President has told me that the country needs me. I have not shirked my duty. I have never engaged in politics and I shall not engage in them now."

The meaning of this declaration was clear. No one had asked him to engage in politics. He had been asked only to administer the army firmly, but it seemed to him the opportune moment to flaunt a facile "aversion" for politics, in order to separate himself from certain public figures whom anti-democratic elements were accusing of responsibility for all the domestic and foreign troubles that beset France. Thus Pétain entered politics by declaring that he was resolved to keep away from them. In reality he became a reactionary politician.

III

For a long time Pétain seemed loyal to the republican regime, and

profoundly imbued with that non-partisan spirit which a democratic government requires from its army chiefs. This explains why various cabinets entrusted him with the highest military responsibilities. Actually, this outwardly serene man nourished a violent ambition for personal power which he hid behind a mask of reserve.

In 1934, Paul Painlevé, the great republican and famous scientist who had appointed Pétain generalissimo in 1917 and had always supported him by his friendship and influence in popular circles, was no longer there to restrain him from entering upon the path of totalitarianism. Joffre, Foch and Clemenceau were dead. Pétain was the only remaining symbol of the victory of 1918. The Chamber of Deputies granted him the credits he demanded. It would have granted him even greater sums had he asked for them. Hitler had been in power for over a year but Pétain, Minister of War, failed to act against this menace. After Doumergue's resignation, General Maurin, Pétain's successor in the Ministry of War, appointed him a full-fledged member both of the High Military Committee and the Supreme Council for National Defense. This made him, in the words of his close collaborator, General

Lauré, "a high military adviser attached to the Prime Minister." General Lauré adds that "because of his cautiousness and competence, Pétain succeeded in exerting a great influence in the meetings of the High Committee." This influence is the exact measure of his share of responsibility for the defeat.

In March 1939, Premier Daladier appointed Pétain ambassador to Franco. In Spain, where his presence flattered the government to which he was accredited while it consummated France's policy of appeasement, he was received with a studied consideration which pretended to draw a distinction between his respected person and his execrated country. The Marshal amiably lent himself to this maneuver and in Burgos he acquired an even keener awareness of his greatness, his diplomatic prestige, his international fame. It also seems that his contact with the Spanish military dictatorship stimulated the ambition which Parisian Rightist groups had persistently tried to arouse for several years.

"Your spirit of sacrifice has gone too far," he had been told. "The day following the February riots, you and not Doumergue should have been called upon to form a Cabinet of National Union. If you

had refused the post of Minister of War, Doumergue's combination, deprived of your authority, would not have been able to survive, and President Lebrun would have been compelled to address himself to you, even though he feared to do so. You would have gone to Versailles and revised the constitution." Such was the song of the sirens.

In 1939, President Lebrun was at the end of his term, but Daladier persuaded him to run again, despite the anti-second term tradition, in order to prevent a contest which, at that grave moment, would have weakened the nation. In this way, Daladier blocked a maneuver which the parliamentary Right and the *Croix de Feu* were initiating in order to create a current of opinion for a plebiscite in favor of Pétain. After the re-election of Lebrun, Madame Pétain, who assiduously frequented Parisian aristocratic salons while her husband was in Spain, did not conceal her bitterness. "When the Marshal is needed for an ungrateful task, no one hesitates to drag him out of his retirement," she complained. "When order has to be restored in Paris, or our relations with Spain improved, when the mistakes made by others have to be repaired, it is he who is called upon and he is always

magnanimous enough to accept. But when it is time to choose a candidate for the highest office in the land, which would be the legitimate culmination of his magnificent career, he is eliminated." And Pétain's friends said that Daladier had sent him to Spain less to strengthen a badly compromised situation than to get him out of the way.

Such reflections, repeated and propagated, explain why, immediately after the Polish reverses of 1939, a group of politicians who had no faith in their country began to intrigue for a Pétain government whose main purpose would be the conclusion of a separate peace. Georges Bonnet and Anatole de Monzie, both members of Daladier's Cabinet, were at the head of this group. Pierre Laval, Gaston Bergery, Marcel Déat, Jean-Louis Malvy, Joseph Caillaux, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and Jean Mistler, President of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber, also belonged to it. Mistler went to consult Pétain in Spain in a special car supplied by de Monzie, Minister of Public Works. Summoned before the Foreign Affairs Committee and subjected to an interrogation drawn up by Bergery and Georges Bonnet, Daladier was supported

only by a minority of the committee's members. This put him on his guard; he adjourned the meeting of the committee and immediately initiated such energetic measures against the communist defeatists that the Pétainist defeatists were frightened and abandoned their plan.

Eight months later, when Paul Reynaud called upon Marshal Pétain and General Weygand in order to restore public confidence after the collapse of Gamelin, the Marshal brought with him his glorious past, his suspicious present and his deep-seated pessimism. The "constitutional defeatism" which had been so irritating to Clemen-

ceau asserted itself on June 13, 1940, at the council of Ministers in the Château de Nitray, when Pétain blamed the soldiers for the failure of their chiefs, and read a memorandum declaring that an armistice was the only solution:

The military situation is such that if the French government does not request an armistice, it is to be feared that the troops, no longer obeying their leaders, may become prey to a panic which would prevent the army from carrying out the smallest operation.

The legend of Verdun had been consummated in the reality of Sedan. It need only be added that Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain will be 86 years old next April 26.

SNUBBED

Freedom hurried down the street,
Edging through the crowd.
Former lovers, passing by,
Neither spoke nor bowed.

Having known the lady well,
Men forsook her arms —
Beauty, overlong possessed,
Loses all its charms.

— CHARLES G. CRELLIN

SETTLERS' GRUB

BY DELLA T. LUTES

THE EARLY American settler rarely suffered from hunger, even if he did from lack of variety. Fish, meat and fowl were abundant in almost every inhabitable neck of woods. But in the dead of winter the wildfowl found pleasanter quarters, and the snow was often too deep for game to roam abroad. Then it behooved the frontier family to have on hand a supply of preserved foods — salted, smoked, dried or “jerked.”

In preparation, then, for the hazardous venture of emigration to the new home, the huge covered wagon stood at the door of the older one sometimes for weeks before the day of departure. With the precision of a steamer's loading, its contents were chosen and fitted into the allotted space. Grain for grinding and grain for seed; meat — smoked, salted and dried; plenty of salt; a few bushels of potatoes and quantities of beans. Dried apples, though bulky, were light and kept well, so they were tucked away by the bagful. Twenty or thirty loaves of bread were often

baked and left to dry until they were light and hard. Rum and whisky, in jugs or kegs, were considered essentials. Sometimes a coop of hens bounced on the tail-board of the wagon, and a cow plodded behind.

But there was little room for “luxuries,” such as sugar, coffee and tea. The settler had not only to provide for the long and uncertain journey, but also to sustain his family after their arrival. It was impossible to depend upon the occasional makeshift stores or the hostelrys along the main routes leading from the East to the Middle West — many of them mere shanties thrown together beside the trail and utterly lacking in comforts. Nor could he hope for hospitality from the few settlers ahead of him. It was essential that each emigrant stand on his own feet.

The settler aimed to arrive at his particular location before the planting season was past. Then the first thing he did, even before

moving the family out of the cramped confines of the covered wagon into the questionable comforts of the log cabin, was to fell a few trees and roll them to one side to dry. He hacked up the ground around the stumps and stuck in seeds: a few potatoes, beans, turnips, cabbage — the hardiest and most easily grown of the coarser vegetables. As soon as he could get enough ground opened up to the sun, he planted a little "patch" of buckwheat, and others of oats, corn, and wheat if he could get it. But these "patches" were small and subject to divers vicissitudes. Even where the land was as mellow as it was in Michigan, my own state, not much cultivating could be done, because of the stumps. Wildfowl, especially geese and pigeons, were charmed with the strange verdure and gobbled it up in a few days with their millions of insatiable bills. Deer found the young corn a delightful addition to their diet of leafage; rabbits discovered a sensational new delicacy in the turnips. It cost the farmer much powder and shot to save anything with which to vary the monotony of his food.

The first winter was a time to dread. The rough log cabin gave inadequate shelter against the bitter cold, and not much better pro-

tection from wild animals and the Indians who, though less wild, were held in greater fear. When weather permitted, the settler hunted. Meat was the chief of his diet then — meat ever stewing in the pot, fresh meat ever hanging from rack or rafter to dry.

What particular flesh it was that our respective forefathers grew tired of depended, of course, upon locale. The follower of the Nebraska trail pressed hard upon the buffalo herd, with prairie chicken for "chinkin'." The Michigan pioneer met a deer at practically every turn, while early Maine emigrants seem to have found moose in every thicket. Writers on food lore dwell on that picture of luxuriant plenty. But the difficulty of finding sustenance in the first two years cannot lightly be set aside. Roads were treacherous and sometimes a man's family could starve to death while he was away hunting for food. Most historians, therefore, touch upon the culinary experiments of first land-breaking days but lightly and with little heart. Besides, there are not too many authentic records. Men were too busy to keep the ledgers, account books and journals in which, through simple statements, they later revealed their own hard-fought lives.

II

A year or two later, however, when women could make rare visits to each other and exchange "cooking rules," they began to keep recipe books; and in these the historian can find plenty of flavorsome material amid which to conceive his dithyrambic eulogies to the art of frontier cookery. Almost any wielder of a facile pen can wax eloquent over a piece of brisket and a sprig of marjoram, but few can sing melodic lays of jerked venison after eating it seven days in one week.

Both in the middle west and Down East, fish were easily obtainable. Maine ran largely to salmon and alewives, the one being a sporting proposition lending spice to the pursuit of provender, the other a mere matter of herding a shoal of stupid creatures into a net. The tired Michigan farmer had to trust mainly to luck, enlivening the evening hour with the element of chance. Inside every cabin door a gun hung on pegs or antlers, and outside every cabin door the fish poles leaned. Today in Michigan, the custom is hardly changed, except that the fishpole rides on top of the automobile and the gun inside.

Wildfowl was everywhere plen-

tiful: pigeons, geese, duck — especially during their semi-annual migration flights — turkeys and smaller birds the year round. What could not be eaten fresh was salted. But, one way or another, meat was the bulwark of the early settler's diet. And by spring the appetite was bogged down by heavy and monotonous food, the tongue hankered for something "tasty." The first tasty thing to be had in spring was "greens." Give the settler's "womern" a field from which she could wrest a mess of early dandelions, cowslips, yellow dock or pigweed, with just a *little* piece of salt pork for seasoning, and she could doctor up a mess of greens that would remove the drab note of dullness from any meal.

The Indians, who, all things considered, and according to the tales of the intruders themselves, treated their new neighbors very well, were not always the shiftless, soulless, uncivilized heathen they have been set forth to be. I must speak most specifically of the Michigan tribes, especially the Potawatomes, for I know their ways and history best. When the first settlers came from York State to the southern part of that territory, the Indians were already growing corn and had neatly-planted gardens of seed vegetables.

They not only taught the white woman how to prepare certain foods in the Indian fashion, but they shared their crops with her — hoping, of course, for an exchange in white man's food, such as sugar or white flour, but most of all the white man's liquor.

Corn seems to have been to a Michigan Indian what moose was to a Maine *émigré*. They could do almost anything with corn except smoke it; indeed the Indian boy, like his little white brother, dried the corn-silk and smoked that. They ate corn fresh, boiled and roasted; they charred it, in which state it was known to have been kept for many years. To char, the green ears, well developed, were set up on end in a row before a long fire; roasting proceeded until the moisture was dried up in the kernels, then the corn was shelled and further dried in the sun. By that time it was so diminished in bulk and weight that it could easily be stored or transported. Put into earthen pots and held for use in the lean season, it was eaten uncooked, cooked, or pounded in a mortar and flavored with maple sugar. This skill the Indian women taught the settlers, to great mutual advantage.

The Indians, according to authentic records, grew an amazing

variety of vegetables as early as 1832. Not only corn, but also beans which, with the corn, they made into succotash; crookneck squash, turnips, pumpkins and popcorn. And they were generous. The Potawatomes made splint baskets holding about half a bushel which they called *morkirks*, and it was no unusual sight, along in the harvesting time of year, to see a group of Indians coming, the chief riding his pony and the women carrying the basket filled with vegetables. If there happened to be any white bread in sight in the cabin where they called, or any sugar or sweet-cake, they would simply squat where they were and wait until it was theirs.

The Indian women taught the Michigan settler's wife many things about cooking in the wilderness. They taught her how to make corn-meal bread out of practically nothing but the meal itself. (They ground their own meal by pounding corn in a hollowed stone.) The meal was moistened with water to form a medium paste, and salted, then spread on an oak board which was tilted against a stone before an open fire and baked on one side until it could be turned. The Indian basted the "cake" with venison or bear fat. The settler's wife improved the rule by adding a little

saleratus to the mixture and basting with cream — when she could get it.

Corn was put to many other uses: hominy was one. The corn was put to soak in lye (made by “leaching” wood ashes) until the yellow outer skin was loose; it was then washed in two or three waters until perfectly white. The method for cooking was to pour boiling water over the kernels, cover, and leave standing all night. They were then removed to a saucepan — one quart of hominy to two of water — and boiled slowly four or five hours. The hominy was then drained, put in a deep dish, salted and buttered and served hot. The same dish is equally delicious today, cooked by the old method, but the hominy can be bought in packages all ready for the boiling. The old-time leach-barrel is seldom to be found even among antiques.

Samp was another favorite dish with the Indian women, and became no less so with the settler's wife. It was made by pounding the hulled corn (dried) to a coarse meal, and eaten with butter and molasses, or sugar and cream when such luxuries could be had.

Corn-meal mush was a staple of every man's diet; but the meal, coarsely pounded in the stone mortar, was not so fine as to ruin the

teeth, as much of it is today. Flour, other than the meal made from corn, was another luxury the settler found he could do without. And the corn-meal “johnnycake” was so common a bread that the settler's wife hated to admit to a neighbor that this was all she had. Still johnnycake, then as now, made good eating.

Excellent, appetizing and sustaining as was the Indian corn, or maize, in all its various food forms, it too grew monotonous. Even the Indians, who were not supposed to be especially susceptible to taste, would trade almost any precious possession for a little white flour — or if their trading overtures were rejected, and begging was of no avail, they would steal it.

Probably the second generation of Down-Easters felt the same way about moose meat as the grown-up children of the first Michiganders felt about beans. The latter, however, still hold their own. Although the traditional milk-pans — in old days the unrivaled containers for any sizable contribution not only of beans, but of scalloped oysters, scalloped potatoes or chicken pie — are now merely “antiques,” avidly sought by collectors of the ancient and honorable, the “pan of beans” retains its position in the center

of any well-planned community table. The pan, however, is usually of prosaic enameled ware, aluminum or pottery.

Among luxuries commonly spoken of as desserts, the settler's wife had few from which to choose. The middle west afforded maple syrup; and in almost every locality, a bee tree was occasionally found by somebody who would share the spoils. As the hoardings of one tree would sometimes yield anywhere from 50 to 150 pounds, such a find was practically a community blessing. In the months when the wild fruits were ripe, the settler's wife sometimes made what she called "shortcake," but that would seem to have been purely a gesture to show that she *had* known what shortcake was. Venison fat and buckwheat or corn-meal flour were nothing to brag about as shortcake timber.

Wild strawberries, in many of the new communities, were as thick as grass. So plentiful were they, in season, that the oxen came in at night crimsoned to the knees, where the berries had been trodden and crushed. These and "raws-berries," huckleberries, wild plums and grapes, lent glamour to plain meals. There was little sugar to be had for preserving, but such fruits as could be dried, were. Cranber-

ries were plentiful and were kept fresh into the winter.

Michigan settlers possessed themselves of hogs and a cow or so in the shortest possible time. No matter how illy she was clothed or how crudely her log cabin was furnished, as soon as a Michigan woman could lay her hands on a little wheat flour, a bit of hog's lard and a cup of milk to wet them up with, she would turn you out a shortcake that would make your mouth water. But that was not yet — not until the first sod-breaking, heart-breaking days were on the far side of the hill, and the weary home-seeker could look ahead into the land where sugarplums grow. On the way up, dried-apple pie was the best he could hope for except when nature took a hand.

III

Of beverages with which to wash down buffalo steaks, collops of moose, haunches of venison, coveys and flocks of wild birds, thousands of bushels of turnips (cheap and not unpleasant substitute for potatoes), barrels of beans, and acres of johnnycake, the diversity was limited. It was whisky that seemed to tip the scales. Old account books render generous testimony to the wholehearted faith placed in this

indispensable commodity. Whisky served as stimulant to labor — particularly in house-raising; as disinfectant in case of accident or disease — the *only* cure for snake bite, lockjaw, or, with quinine, for “ager”; as specific against colic in child or man; and, when used plentifully, as counterirritant in cases of discouragement, despair, doldrums, and divers dangers.

There was buttermilk for the pure in mind and switchel for the man in the hayfield. Aside from the hundreds of gallons of shinbone vegetable soups which it has been my good fortune to inspire (as I have been led to hope) the number of times I have been asked for a “rule” for making switchel is what finally buoys up my faith in the ultimate ascendancy of the democratic spirit in the American people. Not the New Deal nor any old deal dished up from Constitutional remains reassures me, not the state of politics nor religion, not cultural education gleaned from a five-foot shelf, but instead, the simple desire to know how to make switchel. Switchel redolent of new-mown hay and golden shocks of wheat. And therefore it seems to me that I can bring to a close this rambling homily on the genesis of American cuisine in no better way than to end on this high note.

Even at that I cannot offer a “rule.” For you make switchel according to need and you flavor it according to taste. You begin with *cold* water, preferably pumped from a well no less than 60 feet deep. To this you add molasses — not sorghum, nor black strap, nor any modern, coffee-colored syrup from a tin can, but *molasses* from a glubbing jug. You add this until the sweetness suits the taste. Then you spice with ginger — and let no one fool you into substituting nutmeg. The minute you admit nutmeg you are not making switchel — you are inviting the devil, for nutmeg calls for — you know what! Add ginger enough to nip, but not bite the tongue. Stir thoroughly with the pudding stick — the same one you use to stir the corn-meal mush in the iron kittle. When the concoction is thoroughly interfused, pour it into a wide-mouth jug (deep brown, and squat) and carry it while still cold to the hayfield and bury it in the cool, dewy base of a cock of fresh-mown hay. When drunk, it will gurgle musically from the full-lipped jug; and the grateful communicant will wipe his mouth on the sleeve of his wam’us, lift his eyes to the blue of a kindly heaven, and return to his work — a free-born citizen in the best of worlds.

► *"They All Hate Willkie" was one possible title for this article.*

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO WILLKIE?

BY HENRY F. PRINGLE

AT PHILADELPHIA in June 1940, the boys suspected they were right. Wendell Willkie was no true Republican and his nomination chilled their hearts. The GOP party hacks are now blasphemously certain they were right. They have watched the astonishing spectacle of their nominee forcing the fighting on the lend-lease bill, for repeal of the neutrality act and for all-out aid to England. They see him supporting the foreign policy of President Roosevelt and in their bewilderment they grumble, complain and even mutter that he should be cast out of the party. Relatively few of them dare say so publicly, of course, for they are not sure how much Democratic strength he has gained.

The confusion and resentment are not limited to the party hacks. Late this fall, Willkie was the luncheon guest of a group of prominent businessmen and financiers. They were not members of the America First Committee, nor in any sense appeasers. Yet they pleaded with him to abandon his

reckless, non-partisan conduct. Couldn't he realize, they begged, that the 1942 Congressional elections were fast approaching? Party unity could not possibly be achieved while Willkie stood with Roosevelt on all the war issues. The boys down in Washington — anyway, most of them — weren't with him and the complexities were terrible.

"I won't trim," said Mr. Willkie in that middle western twang which has somehow survived the elegancies of a lucrative corporation practice and Commonwealth & Southern. "I won't trim because I can't. I won't because I'd lose whatever effectiveness I have if I did."

Possibly half of his listeners agreed he was right. The other half left the gathering convinced that their one-time savior was even more of a turncoat than the son of Groton and Harvard who had spent nine years in the White House betraying his class and would, unless impeached, continue happily doing so for another three, if not for life.

On another occasion, Willkie spoke confidentially before a similar group. He said that had he been President in 1933 to 1941 it was entirely possible that he might have supported most of the social policies of Franklin D. Roosevelt. He believed, he said, in a greater distribution of wealth — whether for the farmer or for labor. But he drew a sharp line between the inept, ignorant, theoretical, amateurish way in which the New Deal sought to distribute wealth and the way in which he, himself, would seek to accomplish it. The New Deal believed in cutting production, and in doing so decreased the nation's wealth. The Republican Party must increase production and wealth, and then distribute a fair portion of it.

All of which was exactly and precisely what the gentlemen who controlled the wealth did not want to hear. It was sometimes difficult, during the 1940 campaign, to know what the choleric businessmen meant when they pounded the table at lunch and denounced That Man. The object of their wrath might be Hitler; more probably, it was President Roosevelt. But now that the campaign is a year in the past it is impossible, as they voice their wrath, to know whether That Man is Hitler, Roosevelt or Wen-

dell Willkie. The choleric businessmen were sorely distressed, of course, when Roosevelt was elected and a few among them murmured darkly about secession. They didn't mean this. They knew that all evil things, even a New Deal, would ultimately pass and that things would return to the Old Order. The National Labor Relations Board would not be merely restricted. It would be extinguished. So would public housing projects, old-age relief and all the other socialistic-communistic policies of the professors and reformers.

In all of these sentiments, the businessmen are joined by the Old Guard of the Republican Party. They are suffering now from malnutrition and other ailments, but they imagine that they see a better day ahead. Their hopes have, to a lamentable degree, been thwarted by That Man Willkie. The Old Guard cares little for the possibility of greater efficiency in national affairs. Its cohorts want the good old days of Harding and Coolidge, and regarding this they hear ugly rumors.

"The administrations of Harding and Coolidge were administrations in which business ruled the government and went too far," Willkie keeps repeating indiscreetly. "That's why I was a Democrat."

Wendell Willkie is getting it these days from all directions. Let us take the case of Industrialist Y. Mr. Y was among the men of wealth who were scared half out of their wits when the banks closed in 1933 and when revolution, not prosperity, was around the corner. He implored President Roosevelt for help. He called for dictatorial powers for the executive branch and he thought that NRA was certain to save his hide. Soon, though, he changed his mind. The economic situation became a little better. He had no stomach for the reform aspects of the New Deal. Within a year or so, he was black in his hatred of the President and his hatred mounted as the years dragged by. Willkie was a ray of hope. True, he had been a Democrat. But he was a corporation lawyer. He had licked the New Deal in the TVA fight. He understood business and the mysteries of production. But Mr. Y has lately been hearing ugly rumors, too.

"People like that," Mr. Willkie says, "hate me because they know I stand for limitation of corporation profits. They didn't expect anything of the President, but they thought I was entirely on their side."

The Congressional jitters regarding Willkie are mainly due to appre-

hension that he intends to purge the party of isolationists. He has no such idea. He knows how ineffective were Roosevelt's attempts to purge. On the other hand, he will certainly make no speeches on behalf of the appeasers. But the boys aren't sure of this, so they continue to shake, quake and damn him. The irritation extends to state GOP organizations. Last February, the leaders from sixteen states met at Omaha and behind closed doors said innumerable unkind things about their one-time nominee. Publicly the state bosses indicated a policy of "watching, waiting." The out-and-out isolationists pull few punches, on the other hand. Senator Taft, repeating the purge rumor, thought it "unfortunate that Mr. Willkie should attempt to read out of the party those who disagree with him on foreign policy." Bishop Gerald Shaughnessy, of Seattle, said that Willkie was not "the man he used to be and in fact never was." Representative Burdick of North Dakota offered the shopworn charge that he had been nominated "by a Republican clique" dominated by the House of Morgan.

The 1940 nominee seems not at all disturbed by the abuse or even by the possibility that he is wrecking the GOP. This may be because

he is convinced that he is winning many followers from among those who supported Roosevelt. He is also comforted by the pleasant knowledge, so rarely enjoyed by the publicist, that he is living up to his convictions and is doing right. The writer spent part of a morning with Wendell Willkie recently; he was buoyant, happy and completely forthright as he discussed the situation in which he finds himself. The hatred stemmed in the main, he said:

From the small minority who want to see Hitler win.

From those who think the United States could survive and prosper despite a Hitler victory.

From those who want a negotiated peace.

From the members of Congress, possibly one hundred in all, who mistake the organized pressure of America First and other groups for the true sentiment of their constituencies.

From possibly thirty members of Congress who shrewdly, coldly and with calculation believe that appeasement will rule in the United States and therefore have cast their lot with it.

From political hacks who cannot conceive of cooperation with any aspect of the Roosevelt Administration.

From disillusioned conservatives, such as Mr. Y, who believed that a vote for Willkie was a vote for what, in the antique days of 1920, was termed a return to normalcy.

The truth is, of course, that from any practical, partisan viewpoint, Willkie has made outrageous assertions. Last February, for instance, he said he had done his utmost to defeat Roosevelt, but he was elected and he is "my President now." This was sheer partisan treason. A few weeks later, he said that the isolationists did not regard international trade as vital while the internationalists believed "that to remain free, men must trade with one another — must trade freely in goods, in ideas, in customs . . . that the open market is one of the keys to liberty." And what would happen to the GOP's high tariff policies under any such doctrine as that?

Last June, Mr. Willkie denounced as "a wholly outrageous interpretation" the charge that the President surpassed Hitler in his dictatorial yearnings. He has even dared to say that it was "the clear intention of the founders of this country that in emergencies the President should lead." He added that "most of the great measures which have shaped this nation's

position in the world have been the decision not of Congress but of the President," and cited the Louisiana Purchase, the Monroe Doctrine and the building of the Panama Canal in proof.

II

Willkie hasn't been silent since his defeat. He hasn't trimmed. He hasn't equivocated and thus the impression is current — a wholly false one — that he is slavishly supporting Roosevelt on domestic as well as foreign policies. His criticisms have been lost in the turmoil over intervention. Yet he has made his position clear enough.

"The Administration Democrats have the right foreign policy," he said in June, "but they lack administrative ability and they have not learned that wealth must be created before it is divided. The Republican Party, as represented by some of its Congressional leaders, has the wrong foreign policy, but the liberal element in it proposes the right domestic policy. It also contains the administrative ability of this country." Another time he said that Roosevelt had failed "in the most elementary task of management, the task of delegation, the task of calling in the ablest men in

the country and giving them power to act."

However Willkie may have failed as a party leader, he has not, at least, permitted himself to fade into the bucolic insignificance of an Alf Landon. During the six months after Election Day he was making two speeches a week and his mail averaged two thousand letters a day. A large part of the mail was obviously organized. Until the German and Italian consuls were sent home, he received, almost daily, five hundred postcards denouncing his pro-British policies. Most of them were typed in red ink and they repeatedly carried noxious phrases.

Not all of the mail was inspired, however. Last June the Willkie Clubs of America discovered — a phenomenon in political campaigns — a surplus of 7 per cent in its treasury. It had been decided to change the name to Independent Clubs and to continue to work for good government in a less partisan manner. The remaining funds could not be used by the new organization, though, without the consent of the eleven thousand donors, and so each was asked whether he desired a refund. Only a small fraction of the contributors demanded their 7 per cent, but a large number sent blistering let-

ters. An analysis of them, permitted this writer, indicates that Willkie's support of Great Britain and the lend-lease bill was the chief basis of this hatred. The writers were not a little confused.

"Mr. Willkie obtained my money under false pretenses," sputtered a woman in Forest Hills, New York, "and I certainly have no desire to help an organization which encourages Mr. Willkie to wipe his face in the mud at the feet of the New Deal." A woman in Chuckery, Tennessee, asked that her balance be sent to the America First Committee because she assumed the new organization would "put the New Deal plans through behind the Republican Party."

"When I realized just what Willkie stands for, I was glad that Roosevelt did win," wrote an angry Republican in Plainfield, New Jersey. "Of the two evils it is best to keep the one you know best. Every time I hear Willkie on the radio I am nauseated and shut it off as soon as I can reach it."

Good manners marked few of the outraged donors. "I thought I was aiding Republicans in place of a jack-ass," said a lady in Overland, Missouri. "No one respects a toad," wrote a man from Greenville, Kentucky. "I would vote for Norman Thomas first."

A high point of invective was reached by a woman in Delaware, Ohio: "I believed in this man Willkie only to be betrayed by this traitor. He was working for the House of Morgan. When I think of how we excused his illiteracy, his utter crassness, terrific misuse of English, his crude manners, I blush that I could have so completely fallen for this country bumpkin. Now he has licked the boots of the President. . . . Willkie should go back to his farm and raise swine. He fits into such a setting."

The onslaughts have not been merely by mail. In Chicago, last June, his hotel was picketed by the We, the Mothers, Mobilize for America Committee. Earnest lady pacifists paraded past bearing such signs as "Me Too Willkie, Stoooge for F.D.R." and "Washington Crossed the Delaware; Willkie Double-Crossed the United States."

Such letters and incidents are far from pleasant, for Willkie makes no secret that he is willing to be a candidate three years hence and does not pretend that he will refuse the nomination if it is offered to him. Meanwhile he is cheered by the Gallup poll, which reveals that he may have lost as much as 15 per cent of his own vote but that 39 per cent of the Roosevelt voters now agree that he

would make a good President. There is consolation, too, in a poll taken by *The Republican*, a party publication, two months ago. Some four thousand local leaders were asked to state their preference for President among 1940's aspirants. Willkie had lost ground, but he still led the field. In February, he received 51 per cent of the total. In October the tally stood: Willkie, 38 per cent; Taft, 20 per cent; Dewey, 16 per cent and Hoover, 9 per cent.

Willkie will not, in any event, be deflected from his demand for all-out aid to England and for all possible action to defeat Hitler. On this he has led, not only in his own party but in the Administration ranks as well. He has demanded that the GOP cleanse itself of the "ugly smudge of obstructive isolation." His plea for radical amendment or outright repeal of the Neutrality Act, a "hypocritical and degrading law," made it far more difficult for tem-

porizing Republicans or Democrats, fearful of the appeasement vote, to hold back. Repeal would almost certainly have lost in the House. It is Mr. Willkie's profound conviction that the GOP will be out of power for decades to come unless it takes an emphatic stand against isolation. For he has no doubts at all that liberty will be dead if Hitler wins.

"If Hitler wins, nothing matters," he told me. "If Hitler is crushed, the power in this country will go to those who led the fight to defeat him. That's the way it's always been. It was that way after our American Revolution. The third of the people who were against it left the country as soon as they could. The third who had been lukewarm were quickly converted. The third who had been the leaders held the positions of power in the new nation. The Republican Party will be impotent unless it plays its part in leading the fight to crush Hitler."



ITEM: Local pride established the historical myth that Plymouth Colony (1620) and the Boston Puritans (1630) were America's first colonies. Nineteenth century historical writers, New Englanders all, chose to ignore the country's first English settlement in Jamestown, Virginia (1607).

► *Why opera survives and thrives
despite attack and ridicule.*

A DEFENSE OF OPERA

BY WINTHROP SARGEANT

NOBODY but a confirmed opera-goer ever has a good word to say for opera. The most elaborate and comprehensive art form known to modern civilization, it is also admittedly the most corrupt. The great bastard problem child of the musical and theatrical worlds, it is fervently disowned by both. High-brow symphony-goers look down their noses at its overfed stars, its vulgar showiness, its often trivial music. Theatre-goers are appalled by its antiquated traditions, its creaky staging, and by the hopeless code of semaphoric gesticulation that usually passes for operatic acting. The man in the street distrusts it because it is nearly always sung in a language he doesn't understand, because most of its exotic-looking personalities are anything but glamorous, and because his wife is likely to drag him to it as a social duty. The modern intellectual, who never goes near it, thinks of it as a royally-scented fad of the idle rich. He is always solemnly pronouncing its doom and enthusiastically burying it. It is obviously altogether out

of tune with the age of Marx, Hemingway and the skyscraper. According to the best Hegelian dialectics, it should have died long ago.

But opera, in its wholly preposterous way, goes on and on. Every year thousands of sane Americans troop to the Metropolitan, Chicago, St. Louis and San Francisco opera houses and sit solemnly while ancient Germanic gods dressed in animal skins and burlap disport themselves in primeval Nordic forests, or while Renaissance Italians exuberantly poison and maim each other to joyous music. Opera not only shows no signs of dying, it is doing its biggest business in twenty years. Movie competition may have been a blight to the Broadway theatre, but it has not affected opera at all. Radio has evidently given it a boost. Before this winter is over, according to the statistics of *Variety* magazine, no less than seventeen companies will have presented regular opera seasons or tours in the United States. This is probably not an all-time record. There was a time when fourth-rate

barnstorming Italian opera troupes were almost as numerous as Neapolitan restaurants. But it does represent as big a dose of opera as Americans have taken in almost a generation.

The theatre-minded person who shies away from opera's dramatic absurdities is apt to assume that the opera-goer goes to the opera primarily for the music, that what occurs on the stage is unimportant to him provided he gets his fill of beautiful melody and surging orchestration. But this is true, if at all, only for a small number of opera-goers and an even smaller number of operas. A concert performance of *Rigoletto*, minus props, costumes and scenery, wouldn't fill a hall in any musically mature American community. Yet if the opera-goer is really attracted by the dramatic side of opera, his preferences are, from any sane point of view, quite incomprehensible. Opera's dramatic masterpieces (and there are a few such) are by no means necessarily its most popular scores. The keen theatrical subtleties of a *Rosenkavalier* and the swift-moving drama of an *Elektra* or a *Carmen* will attract him. But so will the incredible, "unhand that woman" dramaturgy of a *Trovatore* or a *Lucia*, and the theatrically muscle-bound spectacles of Richard

Wagner. The man whose acquaintance with opera is limited to an occasional glance at the society columns of his daily paper usually ascribes opera's popularity to snob appeal. It is true that opera, in America, was once a favorite social playground of the starched and spangled upper crust. But nowadays a glance at the average Metropolitan Opera House audience will reveal many more tweed suits than top hats. Yet people continue to go to opera. Why? To that question there is no simple answer.

Opera is many things to many different types of listener. The Wagnerian takes it as a religious ritual. He likes fine singing, but only as it contributes to the unfolding of the huge, complicated web of music, ideas and mysterious sound-symbols that make up the specialized art of the Wagnerian drama. He likes Wagner's music but finds it infinitely more absorbing when wedded to the slow-moving, metaphysical stage spectacle than it could possibly be in any concert hall. For here the music itself becomes drama, commenting with a whole vocabulary of aurally-conveyed ideas upon the action that is before him, building up within its own booming monologue all the elements of psychology and dramatic suspense that the stage

spectacle itself seems, to the uninitiated, to lack. That the Isoldes and Siegfrieds are fat, middle-aged and completely innocent of acting ability, matters to him not a whit. They are merely symbols that move like huge, beautifully vocal knights, rooks and pawns on a gigantic chessboard, keeping tab on the incidents of the plot. The game is played in the eloquent, suggestive music of the orchestra, and in his own head.

At the opposite pole from the Wagnerian is the voice fan. Despised by highbrow music lovers, he treats opera primarily as a branch of athletics and he has a lot of fun. He collects the memories of well-placed high F's as a sportsman does hunting trophies. *Lucia* may be trivial music and worse drama, but it offers a set of vocal hoops and hurdles that, tackled by a pearly-throated soprano, can set his scalp to tingling. He annoys all other opera-goers by arriving long after the performance has started, just in time for the soprano's big scene. Dressed in a nightgown and a corn-silk wig, she is, according to the plot, supposed to be going mad. The fact that she has the perfect poise, perky looks and obvious mental stability of a well-fed canary doesn't even occur to him. Carefully as a stock-fancier at a cattle

show, he checks her points: the smoothness of her cantilena, the accuracy and agility of her coloratura, her power, and the evenness and quality of her various registers. As the aria climbs toward its sparkling finish, he mops his forehead with excitement. The orchestra stops noodling expectantly. The soprano holds her long trill teasingly, just a split second longer than is strictly proper, and then, with the sang-froid of a champion hatchet thrower, hits her F squarely in the middle, holding it for several seconds with a full floating tone. Our voice fan is beside himself. He applauds, shouts, pounds the floor, like a track enthusiast whose favorite horse has won by a nose. Then, as the orchestra swings into the next number, he rummages under the seat for his hat and makes his way up the darkened aisle. The maddened soprano's lover has yet to spend a whole act lamenting and meeting a gory death in a graveyard. But to this listener the opera is over. As he gropes his way out of the auditorium he can be heard mumbling vague expletives. If it is not the greatest thing since Patti, it's almost up to the record set by Tetrizzini. Or perhaps it's merely the best that can be expected now that we are no longer in the age of operatic giants. To the voice fan,

opera always seems to be in a more or less continuous state of decline.

There are, of course, musically finicky opera-goers who can only stand operas that are musical masterpieces, who will turn up their noses at anything less than the chiseled counterpoint of Mozart, and will sit enthralled through Beethoven's *Fidelio* or Gluck's *Orpheus* quite oblivious to the dreary stodginess of both these operas considered as drama. To these listeners, the conductor in the orchestra pit is, in nine cases out of ten, the hero of the evening. There are even admirers of good operatic acting who hang on every stance and sabre thrust, and who rate a distinguished carriage as high as a well-turned aria. For them, the mouldy traditions of operatic stage deportment are a mystic rite, as intricate as the Japanese *No* drama, and as far from Broadway realism as a high mass. And then, there are the garlicky denizens of the second balcony and the standee's rail, who break into song as easily as they speak, who weep with their Mimis and Canios, take the multiple murders of *La Forza del Destino* with sighs of sincere horror and bellow bravos after every hand-cranked aria as if they were spectators at a bull fight.

Besides all these specialists there is a middle-of-the-road fellow who

can be termed the "average" opera-goer. His tastes are broad. He likes Wagner and Mozart, but he can also find entertainment in the light music and deft operatic stagecraft of Massenet and Puccini. He likes beautiful voices and is soothed by pleasant music, even the sort that concert-goers would consider pretty cheap. With enough musical flavoring to help him into the mood, he can enjoy the blood-curdling drama of an antiquated nineteenth-century shocker like *Tosca*. He loves to see a baritone or a mezzo-soprano with good stage instincts bring a hair-tearing rôle like *Rigoletto* or *Carmen* to life. He is amused by the routine antics of spear carriers. He even likes the old-world mummery of the opera house itself, with its plaster cherubs and crystal chandeliers, its intermission parade of queer-looking people who become so immersed in the musical atmosphere that they seem to be a part of the spectacle itself. He understands instinctively why the Metropolitan Opera Company, for example, has never been able to make up its mind to move out of the dusty old Metropolitan Opera House, though several far more efficient and better equipped theatres are available. Opera just wouldn't be the same anywhere else. The thing that appalls the

aesthetes is the very thing that he likes about opera: it is an artistic three-ring circus. If its drama is bad, its music saves it. If its tenor can't act, he can probably sing. If its baritone can't sing, he can act. If its backdrops are antediluvian, its orchestral booming will be magnificent. If its chorus looks like a group of bewildered guests at a waiter's masquerade ball, its soprano will outwarble all the sopranos in his memory. Even if the tenor loses his beard, or inadvertently tears off the soprano's wig, the aplomb or lack of it with which he recovers himself will furnish a moment of excitement. There is a fresh element of improvisation about an opera performance that hasn't existed in the legitimate theatre since the days of the old-time troupers and stock companies. Opera's very imperfections give it a game-like uncertainty which adds more fun per scene than all the slick direction of Broadway or Hollywood could produce. It is this three-ring circus quality, I think, that accounts for opera's tremendous power of survival.

II

Opera today, as an institution, has apparently lapsed into one of its degenerate periods. The number of

operas being composed is still surprisingly large. A great proportion of the most successful music of recent years has, in fact, been cast in the operatic form. One has only to think of the long list of recent provocative productions — Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*, Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mzensk*, Marc Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock*, Virgil Thomson's *Four Saints*, Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, Krenek's *Johnny Spielt Auf*, and the more conventional works of hundreds of other contemporaries — to realize that composers are as deeply involved in the old bastard musico-theatrical medium as they ever were.

But the musical world's prevailing schizophrenia has hit opera even more acutely than it has the field of symphonic music. The fact that operas are far more expensive to produce than symphonies has made the big opera houses even more wary of controversial innovations than the symphony orchestras. The most interesting recent American ventures in the production of contemporary opera have, with few exceptions, taken place outside the tradition-bound territory of the established opera companies. Thus isolated from the permanent machinery of the opera house, they have fallen by the way-

side after a few performances. If the Metropolitan Opera House management had been adventurous enough to put on *Porgy and Bess*, *Wozzeck*, or *Lady Macbeth of Mzensk*, there is just a chance that one or another of these operas might have found a place in what is rather quizzically known as the "standard" operatic repertoire.

This "standard" repertoire, produced year in and year out by the big opera companies, has become a curious, static anthology limited to less than a hundred operas. In view of the enormous range and quality of operatic literature, it seems to have been chosen almost at random. It includes virtually no contemporary works, unless the generation-old operas of such white-haired veterans as Strauss, Mascagni, Giordano and Montemezzi are included in that category. Much of it consists of antiquated but popularly tuneful war-horses trotted out to display the special vocal or dramatic accomplishments of some favorite singer. Some of it consists of real artistic masterpieces. There is, of course, no such thing as a perfect opera. But certain works, like Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Wagner's *Tristan*, and even Bellini's *Norma*, do have the dignity and universality that attaches to great epics. Others, like

Strauss' *Rosenkavalier*, Wagner's *Meistersinger*, Smetana's *Bartered Bride* and Verdi's *Falstaff*, combine great music and unforgettable comedy in a nearly perfect union. Many more, like *Carmen*, *Elektra*, and the much-abused *Pagliacci*, have a cumulative dramatic power that somehow transcends the separate merits of their music and their theatrical material. Operas of this type, I suppose, come closer to being "perfect operas" in theory than the malformed and lopsided spectacles that make up so much of the rest of the repertoire. But the more one tries to pin down opera to reasonable aesthetic standards, the more one is struck by the fact that, in opera, perfection and greatness do not go hand in hand. Beethoven's *Fidelio*, with a complacent, unimaginative drama — theatrically awkward and even vocally ineffective — is nevertheless an operatic masterpiece because its music is great. Gounod's *Faust*, a completely perverted French Catholic parody of Goethe's metaphysical drama, will probably be sung for generations because it contains some of the prettiest tunes in operatic literature.

Of the two big mediums in which most of today's important music is expressed — opera and symphonic music — opera is by

far the coarser. Its aesthetics are dubious. Many of its most successful composers have been musical mediocrities. But it is also the older and the hardier of the two. Where the symphony, with its almost religious concert hall traditions and its all but superhuman standards of artistic workmanship, has remained pretty much the exclusive territory of a handful of great masters — most of them eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Germans and Austrians — the opera, with its looser standards and all-inclusive artistic leeway, has been created and listened to for four hundred years by people of the most varied nationalities, endowments and tastes. Its

history, as a form of entertainment rather than an organized institution, is even older and more universal. The combination of music and drama goes back to the earliest days of theatrical history, and is found in the ritual arts of nearly all primitive peoples. Today, in its restricted, institutional form, opera has become for the moment a static, tradition-bound affair. But the age-old musico-dramatic prostitute has many a trick left. Already she is venturing out of the opera house and ogling the machine age. She has adjusted herself to many a change of fashion before this, and has outlived a great many far more decent art forms.

TRANSMUTATION

Contemptuous sunlight mocked the house by day,
Fleering at time-warped clapboards, which brusque winds
Twitched scornfully; at chimneys' crazy sway,
And futile shabbiness of slatting blinds
And makeshift underpinning, pasture stones,
Rugged and rough, by careless fingers piled.
It stood, a ghostly shanty rackabones,
As barren as the hillside it defiled.
But ah, when moonlight stole across the snow,
Those sagging boards were bars of silver sheen;
Those chimneys, graceful; and those stones below,
Vast silver ingots: in that peace serene
It glistened — a more glorious palace than
The richest dome conceived by Kublai Khan!

— HAROLD WILLARD GLEASON

THE STATE OF THE UNION

The Struggle For Power In Labor

BY BENJAMIN STOLBERG

AS I WRITE, the strike in the captive coal mines has just been called off. The press and the public cast John L. Lewis as the villain of the piece, a copperhead in the national emergency. Let us give the devil his due. To be sure, it was Lewis who called the strike—but this does not change the fact that the strike was essentially a struggle for power between Lewis and Roosevelt. In the end the President appointed an arbitration board acceptable to Lewis in order to have the strike called off. By the time this is in print, Lewis will have the closed shop in the captive mines.

The real issue, as in so many strikes in the defense industries, was a struggle for control over American labor. It was a political rather than an industrial fight. There was no question of wages or hours or working conditions: the sole issue was the closed shop. Since 95 per cent of the coal diggers in the captive mines of the steel com-

panies are already in the union, Lewis wanted the captive mines to fall under the Appalachian Regional Agreement, which recognizes the closed shop. He had little reason to expect trouble, for it was all more or less in the bag and he was to appear at the CIO convention with a resounding victory to his credit.

Agreement was in sight. Myron Taylor, who is the end man for the House of Morgan in the steel industry, had consented to a closed shop. United States Steel is by no means bitterly opposed to the closed shop in its captive mines, or even to an ultimate closed shop in the steel industry, toward which Lewis and Phil Murray are driving. Large scale management increasingly prefers to deal with a monopolistic union completely controlled by its leaders. The classic example is Ford. Once Ford made up his mind that he had to deal with union labor, he actually demanded a closed shop with a union

check-off to make sure that he wouldn't be bothered with internal disputes in the United Automobile Workers.

To be sure, Eugene Grace of Bethlehem Steel and Frank Purnell, who represents Little Steel, opposed the closed shop in their mines. They have always fought labor organization. But they would have had to go along with the closed shop agreement, since the National Defense Mediation Board was all set to recommend it. Grace had to accept the closed shop in the Bethlehem shipyards on the West Coast when the Mediation Board told him to. The Board was going to tell him again.

But at the last moment, the President interfered and timed his interference to nullify Lewis's expected triumph at the CIO convention in order to weaken this isolationist influence. Once the convention was over, the President appointed the three-man arbitration board — John Lewis, President Benjamin Fairless of U. S. Steel, and Dr. John Steelman, who went through the formality of temporarily resigning as head of the Department of Labor Conciliation Service so that he could represent the "public." Dr. Steelman honestly believes in the closed shop.

Far from being out on a limb, where public opinion placed him, Lewis won his point. The President failed to strengthen Hillman with the CIO, which publicly censured his work in OPM. And he failed to weaken Lewis in the convention, which fervently endorsed the coal strike. What weakened Lewis in the CIO convention was his own senseless isolationism in foreign policy. Unfortunately, he is an isolationist for no better reason than his hatred of Roosevelt. The moment Lewis shifts his position on the war, he will have the CIO in his pocket again.

II

This struggle for power over American labor has been a permanent feature of the Roosevelt Administration, from its early NRA days until the present national emergency. To a large extent, our present labor movement, especially in the basic industries, is a government-made trade union movement. Roosevelt is as much of a "labor leader" as any occupant of the White House would be today.

Whether we like it or not, what has happened in this country is a shift in class power. In the last nine years organized labor has more than doubled, from four million to

almost ten. The NRA gave labor the right to organize and then one government agency after another, especially the National Labor Relations Board, speeded up its unionization. But in helping to create this mass labor movement in the basic industries, the Administration has also entrenched a powerful labor oligarchy. This oligarchy sometimes plays ball with the Administration, and sometimes fights it for power over the rank and file. The last CIO convention was torn between two leaders—Roosevelt and Lewis—with Murray as umpire.

The democratic forces in our trade unions have little chance to function and to defend themselves against this unavoidable game of politics. And yet the democratic tradition in our labor movement is so deeply rooted that it can be used to modify democratically all struggles for its control. American labor is not interested in the “class struggle” for the conquest of the whole of American society—a conquest which could have only a fascist finale. It merely wishes to defend its own interests and its own position as one of the pressure groups in our national life. What it needs is the protection of enlightened legislation against tendencies which would turn labor into a

mass base for political exploitation.

The Wagner Act should be amended so that the NLRB would have to protect both sides in a dispute against unfair practices. At present the Act confines “unfair labor practices” to employers, which has given rise to endless trouble. Both Lewis and Green are in favor of correcting this unbalance, which has turned the NLRB into a government trade union agency whose rulings cannot meet the issues of industrial strife. Also, there should be mandatory legislation to prevent the NLRB from playing favorites either with the CIO or the AFL. The workers should be entitled to proportional representation as between the two federations or authentic independent unions, instead of the present majority rule. It was absurd, for instance, to grant Ford a closed CIO shop, when thousands of skilled AFL workers do not wish to belong to the CIO. The New York State Labor Act, in providing for such proportional representation, has avoided all sorts of jurisdictional trouble.

Strikes and lockouts cannot be forbidden in a democracy, even during a national emergency. But the workers are entitled to a secret strike ballot, especially in basic in-

dustries essential to defense. A cooling-off period should be provided. And each important industry should have a permanent board to handle disputes as they arise. Mediation should be mandatory, and strikes and lockouts prohibited during negotiations. Also, every union should be required by law to

issue periodic and detailed financial statements to its members. That would do more than anything else to eliminate the grafters and crooks, and to curb autocrats who use union funds to advance their social or political ambitions and projects. Such mandatory accountings would stop the growing public demand



for union incorporation, which would cripple the labor movement. An incorporated trade union could be fined out of existence, and held "responsible" by hostile courts in ways which could liquidate it. Unions are not profit-making enterprises but social movements, comparable to the Democratic or Republican parties.

If democracy is to survive in our trade unions, communist or fascist leadership of unions must be outlawed. Utopian civil libertarians consider such legislation both difficult and dangerous. It is neither. For one thing, these people aren't hard to spot, for their party line contortions give them away. And it is not dangerous to our civil rights, for the excellent reason that the Bill of Rights protects an open totalitarian only in his right to free expression, not in his freedom to wreck our institutions, and it was never designed to protect active fellow-travelers — that is, provocative agents of foreign powers masquerading as American democrats.

III

And now we come to the highly complex problem of the open versus the closed shop. The terms are unfortunate, and invite a great deal of heated nonsense. During the

1920's, the employers were all for the open shop, by which they really meant the company union. Today the impression prevails that a closed shop necessarily means the obligatory enrollment of every worker in the union. It often does, but it needn't. A great many closed shops — that is, 100 per cent organized unions — are genuine voluntary organizations. Indeed, in the best regulated industries, such as the printing trades, the patternmakers, and some of the needle trades, the closed shop is the natural result of a long democratic process in collective bargaining.

Today the real issue is not the Open versus the Closed shop, but the Open Union versus the Closed Union. When a dictatorial or grafting leadership gets a closed shop agreement, this leadership can keep out or throw out anyone who endangers its racket, and prevent its opponents from getting or holding a job. When a communist-dominated union gets a closed shop, it is practically impossible for an anti-communist to get a job in that shop. Then again, the building trades, which in our large cities are very often plain racketeering unions, may have such high initiation fees that workers not already in the union can't practice their trade. Often these unions simply

"close their books" to new members, and are in effect labor monopolies. A number of AFL unions draw the color line.

Unions should not exclude any worker. Conversely, individual workers should have the right of conscientious objection to joining unions of whose aims or methods they deeply disapprove. A number of progressive newspapermen, for instance, refused to join a closed shop unit of the Newspaper Guild when the communists were in control. In short, what should be outlawed is *a closed shop which is run by a closed union*. If we believe in collective bargaining at all, then vol-

untary closed shops are desirable. The legal prohibition of the closed shop would wreck labor. What should be prohibited is *the coercive, monopolistic union*.

The crisis in American labor is part and parcel of the crisis of our age. We live in a world in which masses of men can be organized by demagogues who know how to exploit their grievances. We live in a revolutionary period in which the whole basis of social power is shifting. And if we want to hold these shifts to our democratic tradition, we must protect the democratic forces, in labor especially, against totalitarian chicanery.

A MIRACLE of faith is revealed in the *Daily Worker* by the eloquent testimony of comrade E. G. Flynn, a communist leader:

When I am on a speaking trip, I say frankly to questioners on current events, "I can only answer up to last Thursday. I haven't seen the *Daily Worker* since then."

THE CHILDREN

When I grow up, I want to be . . .

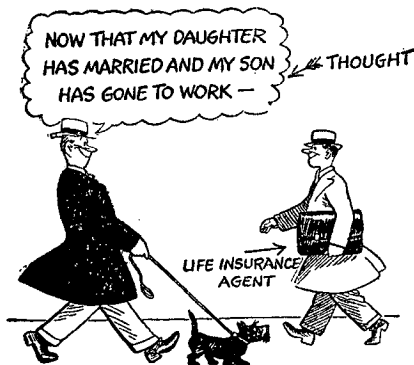
Why do the great-eyed children
still have faith in us whose brows are marked
with the blood of our human kill? Do they not know
we'll kill them too, — they with their sun-browned knees,
their tree-scratched legs and impudent small noses?

We lean to them, with secret mirth we ask,
slyly hiding death behind our backs,
What do you want to be when you grow up?
and eagerly, with candor and with faith
in some strange dream they've picked up God knows where,
they answer us as if the world were fair,
as if they *could* grow up!

The boy with fiddle fingers, and the girl
with a thrush's throat,
the sturdy one who wants a grocery store
and all the licorice sticks that he can eat
and a tiger cat to drowse in the Sunday window,
the scientist, the doctor, and the farmer,
the one who takes apart and reassembles,
the little girl whose doll has feeding schedules,
the pilot and the poet and the builder,
the pigtailed Einstein and the freckled Christ . . .
they answer us with certainty as if
we were on their side in their growing up.
Don't they know that we intend to stop them?
Don't they know we have the bombs and gas?
Don't they know we've won the sky? It's ours,
and we can put an end to all this growing.

Sometimes I have a feeling that they know:
times when they look at us with fearless eyes
and say, *When I grow up, I want to be . . .*
and turn away and gaze into the evening
with calm light in their faces. Oh, they know
we're not on their side, and they mean to fight!
They're brave and tough and beautiful, they know
some of them will grow up, in spite of us.

— FRANCES FROST



If your life insurance agen

MAYBE IF YOUR life insurance agent were a mind reader, he could be of even greater service to you than he is now.

However, because he is not a mind reader, the effectiveness with which he serves you and your family depends a good deal upon the information you give him about your personal and family affairs.

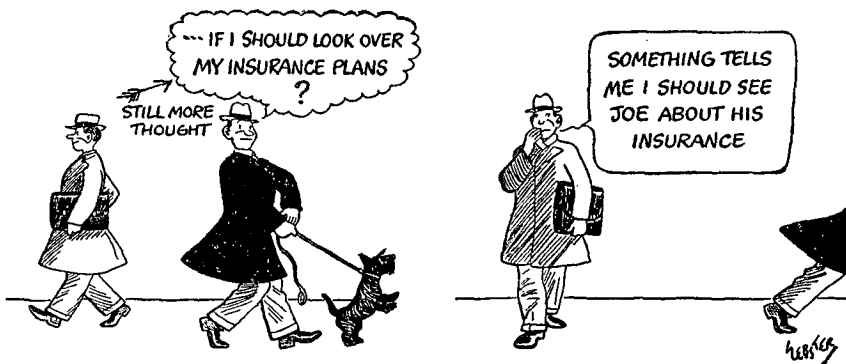
► Perhaps, since you last talked with your agent, there has been a birth in your family. Maybe a son has begun to support himself. Or it may be that increased income enables you to think in a new way about your own future.

Suppose, for example, that your older children are no longer depend-

ent upon you. In such a case, you may wish to review your life insurance program and possibly elect a different method of settlement. To advise you properly, an agent must take many factors into account. Will your son or daughter need further financial aid in the future? Have your living expenses been reduced so that you can now plan more definitely to retire?

► Your agent can assist you with these and similar questions in so far as they relate to life insurance. To help you best, his services must be personal services, based upon consideration of your individual needs and circumstances.

If you are a Metropolitan policy-



Were a mind reader

holder and feel that a change in your situation calls for a review of your policies, get in touch with your Metropolitan agent. If you will tell him what is in your mind, you will find him equipped to serve you efficiently and wisely; if necessary, he will enlist the help of Metropolitan's

Home Office.

► Your agent's services are always available without additional charge of any kind. He will consider it a privilege to have you call him. Or, if you prefer, get in touch with your Metropolitan District Office.

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This is Number 45 in a series of advertisements designed to give the public a clearer understanding of how a life insurance company operates. Copies of preceding advertisements in this series will be mailed upon request.

Metropolitan Life Insurance Company

(A MUTUAL COMPANY)

Frederick H. Ecker, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD • Leroy A. Lincoln, PRESIDENT

1 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y.



► *A call for all-out love — and
understanding — of our country!*

OUR AMERICA: 1942

BY WALDO FRANK

TWENTY-TWO years ago, a young American wrote (in *Our America*): "America is a Promise . . . And in a dying world, creation is revolution." That our world is dying, is more visible today than it was then. And that the young man had inherited the dangerous optimism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries — which blandly announced the straight inevitability of Progress and could not conceive of revolution that was not progressive and creative — is very plain to him now. For we are in a revolution; and although it contains the challenge of creation, in its present victorious phase headed by Hitler and his conspirators, secret or open, the world over, this revolution is the antithesis of creation; it is demonic and destructive. America is still a Promise. But America, once the admired of all nations, is today a Promise challenged and menaced by a vast and greatly organized world alliance.

All of us know what the American Promise is, in the sense that the words which state it are the

common words of our schools, of our best literature, and of our politicians. Some of us prefer the prose of Jefferson and Lincoln, others the poetry of Emerson and Whitman to express what few of us would admit we do not *understand* at all. Yet it is the one dangerous truth in our American life that we do not understand what the Promise means because we do not truly love it. And without love, there is no active understanding. We take the Promise for granted. We pay it off with rhetoric and the waving of flags, or with the appropriation of billions of dollars and the sending of our young men into the Army. Having done this, and bought the requisite number of bonds and paid the proper contributions, we are satisfied — not only that we have proved our understanding of the Promise and our devotion to it, but also that we have guaranteed its fulfillment. This is the great danger.

Our children in ten thousand schools sing the national anthem each morning. Their elders, by the millions, crowd the factories and

mills, turning the iron, the aluminum, all the wealth of the land into instruments and weapons of "defense." We paste on our cars "God bless America." In the windows of our shops, the passer-by sees, "I'm Proud to Be an American." The manufacture of flags goes up a thousandfold. It is all for the good if we truly love the America that is a Promise. If we fool ourselves about that, we fool ourselves about everything. Then the salute to the flag and the posters become vapid; the billions for "defense" and the millions of men in uniform will, once the external enemy is broken, become the means for our enslavement by the enemy within us. For ignorance and lack of love are not negative, nor are they abstractions, as the modern liberal world has believed. They are positive, evil forces: the true enemy. Although the names change, they beget in every age to do their destructive work.

Let us see ourselves straight. We have the lion's share of a continent to live in. North of us is Canada, and most of Canada is bleak and frozen. South of us is Mexico, a land fabulously rich and fair, but hard, tragically hard, for men to live in. Unlike Mexico, our land is moderate; nature helps us to make it livable.

In this hospitable home of ours, dwell the best-intentioned folk of all the world. I do not make this superlative statement lightly. I have lived among many peoples, in the Americas, in Europe, in Africa and Asia. These were not mere official or journalistic visits. I have *lived* with these peoples. Yet I say, categorically, that I know no nation whose people as a whole equals ours in general good will, in conscious and deliberate good intentions. In our lack of envy, hate, suspiciousness; in our open-mindedness and open-heartedness and open-handedness, too; in our often naïve hospitality to the stranger and kindness to the neighbor, we are blessed and we are peerless among the world's peoples.

Given the greatness of our resources, should this not augur well for our future? Not necessarily. The road to Hell, runs the old saying, is paved with good intentions. Doubtless, the men who took that road did not know where they were going: The good intentions lured them on, put their minds to sleep. Generosity is only a weak nebula of love. Good will is not necessarily good thinking. The open-handed and open-hearted person is often simply a child who is having a good time, who has never been seriously crossed or deprived and who has

not yet been chastened. We are a good-willed people, but because we have not yet been forced to think, we are not an intelligent people. We are a candid and generous people because we are strong and the skies and soil of a potent continent are our blood. But because we have not yet gone deep, riding with ease the surfaces of our experience, love is yet weak within us.

In a sense, these are traits of youth and we *are* a young people — a young people with the inherited cultural elements of old peoples. Critical intelligence, the capacity to see life whole, and above all the capacity to love, are the slow achievements of maturity. Youth thinks it loves, loving only itself. Its “in-loveness” is self-infatuation and only so long as the world caresses it will it preserve its instinctive good will and generous behavior. This is all true. But let it not be forgotten that maturity is uncertain, as rare as it is difficult, and that we have been hurled by history into a crisis, a world crisis where maturity is imperative *now*.

The good will of us Americans is not enough. It has been tested neither by the fire of suffering nor by the light of the mind. There are no more richly endowed men and women than the Americans, but there are people in the world

today in whom intelligence and love are far more developed — which means, more objective and more real. The quality of our good will is soft and shallow. (If you doubt this, go to any American town where there is labor trouble.) This may be (in fact it is) because of our comparatively golden past, because of the largesse of nature in our continent and our rich cultural heritage from Europe. We have been the *jeunesse dorée* among nations. But the nursery time is over. We face a cosmic storm of ill will, a world force sworn to destroy us. If we understand the nature of this aggressive world ill will, we shall understand the hate in it as a perverse form of *love*. For love is indeed the greatest force in the world, but it has many avatars and one of them is hate. Hate, too, is potent in its destructiveness, and even more in its contagiousness. Hate, no less than love, is inspiring. It inspires hate, wherefore its destructiveness in a sense is progressive. Only the wholeness of love, purer and more ruthless than that perversion of love which is Hitlerian hate, can save us from it.

Fascism has many meanings. A very good case, for instance, could be made for Hitler by stressing exclusively *part* aspects of his

action. He wishes to make his people great and strong. Laudable, surely. He wishes to unify the world, doing away with the anarchy and wastage of competing economies. That is good. He inspires his followers to serve, if need be to die, for a cause greater than their comforts and their individual lives. That is good, also. He appeals to the heroic and to "the blood," motives in men beyond the cool and cautious syllogisms of mere practical reason. Indeed, he subjects technics to a vaulting ideal.

But if we look closely, the canker of disease is in each one of these "good" Hitlerian principles. He would make Germany unified and great, but by physical, brute domination, and by wiping out the polarities of the human spirit through which integration is achieved. He would unify mankind — but downward, by emptying man of all his variety of vision and emotion; by murdering, instead of harmonizing, the deep variety of human forms. He inspires his followers to die for him, but by emptying them of their historic devotions to God, family, justice, Truth; by taking from them all their self-responsibility and leaving them slaves. And finally, his appeal to "the blood" is a war cry of the pack, to murder and ravage.

This discrepancy between the claims and the true aims of fascism is of high significance for Americans. Do not be too sure that a perversion of good will equally fatal could not come within us. The Germans, too, are a great people, a young people. They had intelligence, they had love, they had a religious and a socialized culture superior to ours. Yet their legitimate aims *for some inward reason* became cancerous. Let us understand, for our own sakes. We are threatened today by two lethal forces. One is the external hate of fascism in the aggressor nations; one is an inward threat, a fifth column of the spirit — the tendency toward hate and the demonic in us all, when through lack of knowledge and of discipline, of method and of humble wisdom, our love fails to find a way to live. The foe is two-faced and the paradox is this: that if we devote ourselves exclusively (as we are doing) to fighting the outward "face" without awareness of the other, then the other — the inward face of the foe — becomes *our* face!

II

In terms of our common American problems, let me make this plain. The country at the moment is in

high gear for industrial production. Our ideal motive for this is defense of our democratic system. A practical result is that men are again making money and quarreling about money. The capitalists and the high-salaried technicians must pay huge income taxes, but do not forget that this is because their incomes are huge. The workers want their share and when they don't get it, they threaten to strike. Whereupon not only the reactionary elements in business and politics, but also the men who see the danger to our national existence if production bogs down, call the unions traitors to defense and advise repressive measures which would outlaw strikes in time of national emergency. Here is the threat of a step in the direction of fascism (which simply makes the "national emergency" permanent), a step taken sincerely in the name of the defense of democracy.

Another consequence of the defense program is the shrinkage of means available for all cultural activities that are without immediate practical uses. If the war goes on, or the threat of war, boys will be withdrawn from colleges to become soldiers, sailors and mechanics. Funds for experimental education will freeze and there will be less and less resources for any activ-

ity — intellectual, aesthetic or spiritual — beyond the uniform methods that prepare young men to fight or to produce fighting machines. There will be that ruthless leveling downward, that heedless simplification of the energies of the cultural life, which is another trait of fascism. All this will be done in the sincere name of defense from fascism.

The pacifist's answer to this problem is unrealistic and sentimental. It won't save us from the armies and the machines of foreign aggression to produce no army, no defensive machine of our own, simply because the production endangers our democratic values. It does, most earnestly, behoove us to go ahead with our defense production, to perfect our Navy and drill our soldiers, but in such a way that the essential values of American Democracy, the American Promise, shall survive. The one available way is to deepen and heighten our *experience* of what America stands for, of what America promises, until the democratic way of brotherhood and justice is so engrained in us, so explicit in our institutions and so implicit in our intimate lives that even the forced turning of the country into a concentration camp would not destroy it.

Take a family — an ideal one, I

admit. From the grandmother who darns stockings by the fire down to the lad who is always out playing ball, the family knows plenty of differences, plenty of disagreements between its members. Yet (in my sense of the word) they love one another. Their love is an instinctive understanding, an acceptance and respect that come from understanding the others' way of life, a tacit agreement that each shall be permitted and aided to live his life to the full, within the frame of the general welfare. However humble, this love in embryo is both brotherly love and love of God.

One night the family's house catches fire. The head of the house takes ruthless charge. He gives orders without courtesy or consultation. He unceremoniously carries the old lady downstairs and drops her on the lawn. He bundles the howling baby in a blanket and tosses it, head first, to his son on the ladder. In his need to get at the fire, he smashes toys, dishes, heirlooms. Is that fascism or totalitarianism? Of course not! When the fire is out, each member of the family will resume his rights, privileges and freedom. Because from the start there was mutuality, understanding. Because there was love.

That is what I mean and what I fear about America. There is not

feeling enough among us, one for another; not the lucid understanding which nourishes and flowers from love, and which *alone* inspires and disposes the skill with which men and nations weather crises. Without this love, the huge machine we are so rightly building to defend us will prove a juggernaut to destroy us. That this danger is real is proved by the vicious statement broadcast daily on the air and in the press by our national leaders: *Machines will win the war*. Indeed they will; they will win it for the human spirit *behind* the machines!

Why do we not love our America more? The pretty lies of our movies, the tinsel songs of our radio — do they show love? Do they reveal America? Our land is rugged and immense, infinitely varied. What land merits love more than ours, with its heroes and its saints, its poets and prophets, its countless humble noblemen and noblewomen? Our land, with its myriad valleys and its thousand idioms of folklore to incarnate the world's dream. Look at our America: then turn to the meager language of our songs and arts, the shallow "realism" of our popular novels, the piddling "wisdom" of our scientific critics who would warp the spirit of creative man into

their little rules of empiric reason. To love is to see clear. See America clear, in its body, in its dream, in the eyes of its deep vision, and we will love America. We will know its Promise to be *our* flesh and blood. No fear then that we will betray it. The machines we make to destroy Hitler will be safe in our hands.

The orators, the preachers, the school textbooks tell us that we are all one family — the Arkansas Negro sharecropper with the Yankee farmer, the Oregon lumberjack with the Pennsylvania miner, the Harvard intellectual with the girl studying shorthand in Tuscaloosa, the pro baseball player in Brooklyn with the Indian basket weaver in a New Mexico pueblo. It is not good enough. It is not real enough. How can it be real if our lives and our economic and social systems do not *enact* brotherhood? The family I've conjured would not truly love, would not truly be, if its lives were not a practical mutual system of give-and-take and of fair liberty. For if love is lucid and joyous understanding, its premise is justice and harmony in mutual action.

This is a large order. Love is a dynamic aspiration that never reaches its goal. What frightens me in the common state of mind of my

beloved country is the weakness of determined and intelligent effort to enact the good will we all have. Love moves the mind. Our national mind, as embodied in political and industrial leaders, is busy enough perfecting details of our production machine. Our national mind, as embodied in our teachers and publicists, is busy enough polishing the inherited slogans and formulae of the American Promise. Our national vision, as embodied in our artists and creative writers, is busy enough soothing, entertaining, flattering, or excoriating the public.

But I see far too little of the dynamic activity, of the magic of love; far too little recognition that love must have its place and its work if our titanic national effort is not to founder or go wrong. I speak of the love which, with lucidity and joy, illumines our institutions, to make them better instruments of justice and personal freedom, and which reveals unto each man his share in the American Promise so that he may live and love it.

The world is in revolution and America is the Promise that this revolution shall be creation. America, today at the helm of all human hope, must revolutionize the revolution.



LOOK UP MARY

A Story

BY MORT BRAUS

DURING the drive back to town Mary was all right, but once they stood in the lighted driveway of the bus depot, only a minute left between them, she felt the tears coming and braced herself.

"I guess it's hail and farewell," she said.

"I . . . guess it is," he said.

"After you're settled . . . write me sometime . . . how you're getting on —"

"I will . . . every day, Mary!"

The catch in his throat, the hard pressure of his hand, she thought. *He means it, he means it!*

"Sometime — if you're passing through again, don't forget to look me up."

"Look you up! I'm coming back for you, Mary! I love you, Mary!"

He needn't be gallant, he needn't.

"Never mind, Jeff . . ." *Smile, Mary.* "Just send me an orange."

The bus was gone now, but still she stood there, feeling nothing. Then she walked dully back to her car and drove off.

She drove blind to the dead streets, the flat little city which bulked dark against the lighter darkness of the summer night.

He'll forget me! she thought. *He'll never come back. Oh, sure, he'll remember me — as far as Kansas City, Denver, even Albuquerque, maybe. He'll even send me picture postcards — "I miss you terribly, honey. Wish you were here." But in Los Angeles, he'll have other things on his mind. He'll meet other girls.*

Oh, sure, he'll remember me, all right: "Speaking of dames, some years ago, traveling to the coast, I found myself stuck in Central City for the day. Well, I was about going nuts for something to do when I remembered the name of a girl a pal gave me to look up. What have I got to lose? So I phone her. Well, as I live and breathe, she turns out to be the cutest little trick you ever set eyes on. Of course, I don't dream anything's going to happen, but I'm not with

her five minutes and I see the kid's fallen hard. Well, I don't let weeds grow under my feet."

No, Jeff couldn't have spoken or thought that way about her. He said he loved her. . . . But he was gone and he'd never come back. Never!

She drove past her house, past the town, onto the open highway, past open fields dimming into the night. She drove until she came to the shoulder which dipped toward the grounds of the country club, then got out and walked. She walked, gusts of coolness rushing past her, rustling the grasses of the westering plain. She stopped at the place where they had stopped before.

The remembrance of their being there drew a cry from her: Why did he have to come! Just when she'd gotten resigned to the little town, the little people . . . and Harold.

Now she'd hate it all again, now she'd break with Harold. Yes, she knew herself. She'd go back to her sullen ways so that her mother would sigh and folks would resent her as they had so many times before and turn away from her for holding herself too good for the town . . .

Why didn't they let her alone?

"Hello, Mary Taylor? I'm John

Doe. Tom told me to be sure and look you up when I got to town."

"Mary Taylor? You don't know me but Jack said to say hello for him."

"Miss Taylor? — I'm a friend of Jim's — said I'd miss something if I didn't look you up."

Look up Mary! Look up Mary! A swell girl, Mary! A great girl! Sure — don't forget to look up Mary when you get to town.

"So you're a friend of Tom's — not Tom from *Philadelphia*! How is dear old Tom?"

"Just doing fine — down in Washington, you know. Working for the OPM or something."

"How is Jim?"

"Never better — his wife just had another baby girl."

"I'm so glad to hear it — how long you going to be in town, Mr. Doe?"

"A coupla days."

"The pity — you won't have much time to see our fair city. Pleasure trip, Mr. Doe?"

"Wish it was — with the Royal Vacuum Cleaning Corporation. Sell America's finest. Say, you wouldn't mind showing a stranger his way around?"

"I'd love to, Mr. Doe. Any friend of Tom's is a friend of mine."

"What you got on for tonight?"

"Well . . . er . . . I did have

something planned but since you're going to be here such a short while . . ."

"That's perfect, Miss Taylor. We'll have dinner — say, where's there a good place to eat? It's so darn hard to find a decent restaurant in these burgs — oh, my error . . ."

She'd get dressed in her best for the visiting firemen. *Mary Taylor, Local Belle.*

"Yes, Mr. Doe, the Cornhusker is a very nice place."

To break the ice, they'd chat awhile about the mutual friend, both overpraising him. Then he'd discover what a cute little trick she was.

"Gosh, you're so different from the girls back home!"

Coyly, "How so, Mr. Doe?"

"Well, you don't put on airs — You're so sweet and unspoiled —"

Sometimes, she'd wanted to answer, "Yes, and I make my own dresses, too."

Then the line as per usual, "How come one of the local boys hasn't grabbed you off?" Or, "Don't you sometimes get awfully bored and fed up with it here — well, you know what I mean."

That was her cue to give him the hometown booster routine — *Mary Taylor, Chamber of Commerce Girl.*

"Why, Mr. Doe! I'd have you

know Central City is the leading city in the state!"

"I didn't mean any disrespect —"

"Better not, Mr. Doe. Seen the new state capitol yet? Well, you've got a real surprise coming — a national monument!"

Then highballs, she'd show him the town, more highballs. He'd try to make love to her or maybe he wouldn't. Usually, he would. Always, there'd be that sad parting scene at the station. *Mary, Fair Juliet . . .*

"Gee, Mary, you're a great girl. Just my hard luck, I'm married." Or, "Wish I could stay longer. I could learn to care for you a lot." Or, "If you're ever down my part of the country and don't look me up, I'll be awfully hurt."

Or, "*I'm coming back for you, Mary. I love you, Mary!*" *That was Jeff. But he'd never come back. They never did . . .*

Doctor, lawyer, beggar, draftee — they all came, passing through. Business trip. Pleasure trip. They all looked up Mary. They all held hands with Mary. They all got crushes on Mary. Because Mary was a darn cute trick. Mary was always chock full of fun. Mary was the sweet, homespun type. *But nobody ever rescued Mary. No Knight on a White Charger. Mary, the plain-flower wasting its fragrance . . .*

She recalled suddenly how it started — the spring of '31. New York. She'd gone there to see a specialist about her father's eyes. Raymond P. Smith. She'd met him at a fraternity dance, at Columbia. Her cousin Bob had taken her to it. Her first love.

They were kids, of course. It had never come off. But Raymond had never forgotten her. *Not good old Mary.* A season didn't go by without a friend of his passing through, phoning, passing the word along to his friends passing through. *Look up Mary.* Until it had become a sort of chain visit: Raymond to Joe, Joe to Jim, Jim to Jack, Jack, Dick, Dick, Leonard,

Leonard . . . to *Jeff!* Until the through-life of the town had become native to her.

Now Jeff had to come, Jeff had to come, only to leave her alone on the plain. *No, he would never come back to her. She was a fool to think that he would. Love didn't happen that fast in real life. Just words. No, not with a high-paying job waiting for him in California. New money, new interests.*

She looked up into the night, sighed, walked stiffly back to the car. Tomorrow was another day. Tomorrow — the office again. Tomorrow — Harold again. The Town. *Mary, start resigning yourself again, start dying.*

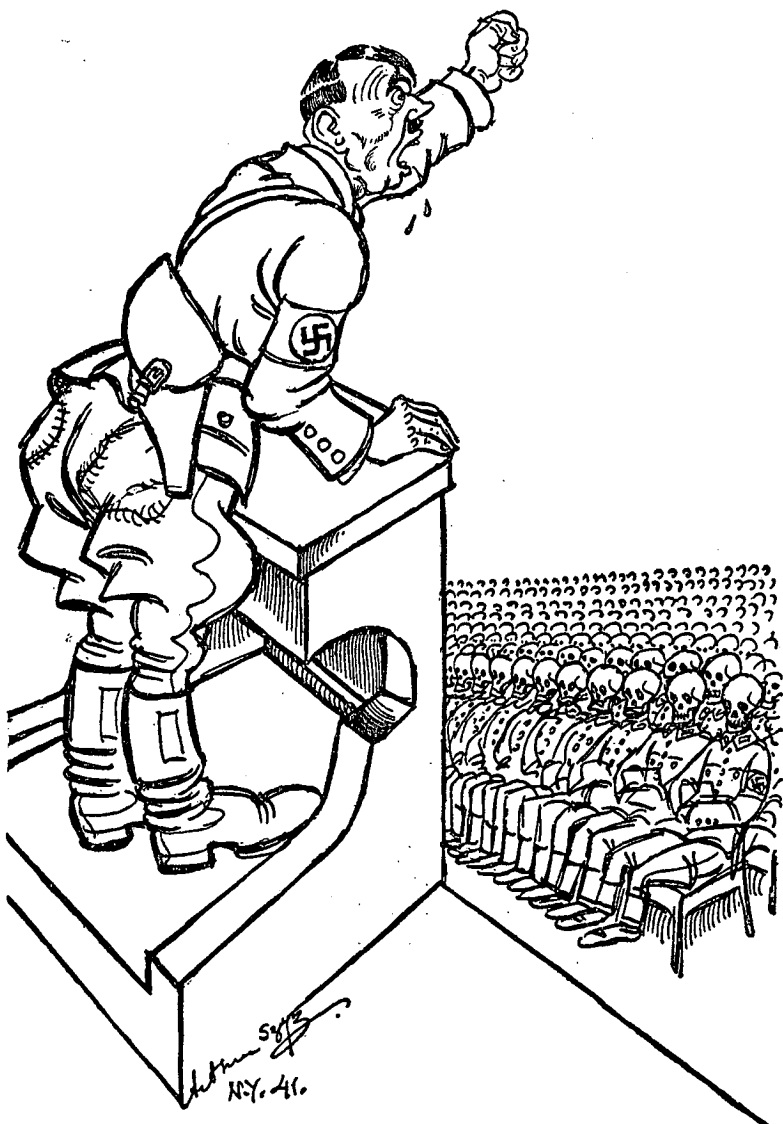


QUESTION FOR STORM TROOPERS

Can he forget,
Who once has known
On wood, on steel,
On dust, on stone,

On cloth, on skin,
On snow, on mud
The color of
His victims' blood?

— RICHARD ARMOUR



Kameraden!

LISBON: CITY OF VICE AND INTRIGUE

By S. L. SOLON

LISBON is a pastel-shaded patch on the River Tejo, a place of poverty and memories, an incredible city of melancholy gaiety, bustling commerce, uncontrolled vice and wartime intrigue. Europe's tragedy has been the making of Lisbon. Airports are crowded, swarms of ships use the neutral harbor and a hundred thousand transients fill the coffers of the gambling casinos.

As the last remaining link between belligerents, it is the only city in Europe where the airplanes of Britain, Germany, Italy, the United States and Spain come and go regularly on the same flying field. The pilots drink at the same bar; the passengers share the same hotels. There is politeness in this intercourse but no amiability. The British pilot who has skimmed over German fighters in the mouth of the Channel and the German pilot who has been in bombed Berlin the day before do not lose sight of the war in a neutral corner. But the neutrality of Lisbon is extremely useful to British and Germans

alike; it is this fact, of course, not the presence of Portugal's shuffling conscript army, which has kept the war out of Europe's sunny anteroom.

The government, aware of its position and walking a diplomatic tight-rope, follows a policy of hear-no-evil, see-no-evil. The press is rigidly controlled. A German dispatch is followed by a British communiqué; an article on the beauties of Rhine scenery is countered by a description of the English countryside; a trade agreement with Berlin follows on the heels of a commercial pact with Britain. There is an apocryphal story that every night the Minister of Commerce counts up all the sardines available for export and scrupulously divides the number by two: half for England, half for the Axis. The story is not true because most of the sardines right now are going to Germany.

Lisbon itself reflects the somewhat unreal character of its government. Night spots run full blast, prostitution is big business,

travelers coming out of the war zone think they have entered Paradise — but an almost visible pall hangs over the city. You ride out to Estoril one night and watch the flashes of shell fire a few miles off the coast. A low rumble reverberates in the air. You think it may be summer lightning but then it turns out, a few days later, that a ship has gone down in a fight, with a hundred or two hundred lives lost. Nobody cares. Diplomats, refugees and businessmen are too busy with the Casino's wheel, if and when they have money.

Sex hangs over all Portugal like a thick, unhealthy fog. It is not gay and enchanting, as people imagine it in Latin countries. Instead, it is dull, bloodshot, commercial, mean. Prostitution is one of Lisbon's flourishing industries. It goes on day and night, barefaced and uncontrolled. The thousands of prostitutes, it is explained, serve as an economic funnel through which foreign money passes into the stores and life of the city. There is something neurotic about the Portuguese themselves: they will collect morbidly around a café to watch an American or British woman sit with her legs crossed.

The healthiest sentiments exist among the common people. They realize that if Hitler wins, their lot

will be even worse than it is now and now it is almost indescribable. Lisbon's cheapest article is labor. If a man dies in an industrial accident, his widow collects about seven dollars and is told to forget it. Radio operators on Portuguese ships, who get about thirty dollars a month, have taken a wage cut, even though passenger rates are up 600 per cent. As one would expect in these circumstances, the lottery is a major industry. The national foods, dried codfish and rice, are unobtainable except on occasional rations and prices on everything have shot up steeply.

But the visiting stranger can buy anything if he has money. American cigarettes cost about forty cents a pack and oranges are a dime each. American magazines are in relatively good demand (considering that only upperclass Portuguese read English) but prices are prohibitive for the most part: the AMERICAN MERCURY sells for about fifty cents, which amounts to a day's wages for a policeman. People buy magazines from the United States, no matter what the price, because America is the great and golden dream. Somehow, somewhere, sometime, they expect America to save the world. A ragged bootblack who shined my shoes one day on the waterfront

refused to accept payment. "Next time you pay," he said. "This time it is for President Roosevelt."

II

While the people look toward America, agents for the belligerents use Lisbon as a propaganda newsstand. It is possible to buy cheaply the press of England, Germany, Italy, Spain and France. Airplanes rush the newspapers to Lisbon and sometimes they cost less than in their home cities. Every morning the Reich Propaganda Ministry is able to get its package of English newspapers and, in turn, the Ministry of Information in London gets the German papers. Parenthetically, it may be remarked that there has been a noticeable letdown in the German press. Pages of eulogies for fallen officers have been shortened considerably. Stories are sombre, emphasizing the necessity for sacrifice. One article, dealing with a visit to a hospital for wounded soldiers on the Eastern front, contained this line: "The dignity of the German soldier starts when the threshold of heroics is passed and the vast space of suffering begins."

The agents of the belligerents make hay under the Lisbon sun. A few miles out, at the elegant

casino in suburban Estoril, there is an unofficial center for extra-curricular diplomatic activity. Here is the great rumor exchange where one can hear the latest gossip about Himmler's arrest, the new Russian mystery plane or the imminent attack on Gibraltar. Not even experts can sift fact from fancy. In Lisbon itself, the belligerents use the city as a laboratory for the development of new propaganda techniques. Crowds of Portuguese assemble around the photo displays of *Actualidades* (news) maintained by the powers. The Portuguese are not given to facial expression. They look with blank interest at the German pictures of roaring tanks and Russian prisoners, and then walk down the street to look with the same intensity at British photographs of women at work in Britain. The only displays which really arouse the onlookers are the clever Nazi pictures of thinly-clad Aryan girls illustrating health and beauty. The Portuguese is a sucker for anything with sex appeal. For a time, the pinching epidemic was so widespread in Lisbon that the government had to take action.

Refugees are a headache to Portugal. The country is fed up with them. The reasons for this are psychological, since the refugees have been an economic boon. With

a tradition of hospitality and utterly without race prejudice, Portugal at first received the influx of foreigners warmly. Naturally, the newcomers were expected to pay well for the privilege and they did. But while the Portuguese were ready to take refugee money, they were not so eager to accept refugee ideas. Foreign women, they discovered, visited cafés and actually went in swimming at the beaches — behavior unknown to the conservative Portuguese. The free manners, abbreviated bathing suits and general air of emancipation was a challenge to Portuguese women, who spend their lives in cooking, childbearing and needlework. They regarded the foreign women as hussies and resented them. As for the Portuguese men, they were excited by this glimpse of a world unencumbered by fettered marriage and commercialized sex. The government finally had to step in. Ample bathing suits were decreed for both sexes. Other restrictions were imposed.

For such reasons, and simply because the refugee influx is so big, so tragic, so disturbing to the routine of a backward nation, Portuguese feelings veered against the strangers. Peanut steamship companies, whose ships were suddenly in great demand, flexed their

muscles and started kicking helpless customers around. Exorbitant charges were made for miserable accommodations. Police regulations multiplied until the life of a refugee in Lisbon became a perpetual scramble to answer questions. Refugees were thrown unaccountably into prison and sent to the Calcutta holes at Caxias, a few miles from the city. One woman, seventy years old and ill, was sent to Caxias for some passport irregularity and kept there for several weeks. She was released only after several agencies and two governments had intervened.

An official explained to me that, in view of the international situation, it was necessary for Portugal to take extraordinary precautions. But as everyone in Lisbon knows, it is only the small and helpless who are picked on and never the plausible agents, whose papers are naturally always in order. The latest step is the expulsion of most refugees from the large cities into virtual exile in the provinces. Conditions there are quite tolerable, but the question is asked: "Since there can be no economic reason for expelling the refugees from Lisbon, what are the political reasons and who inspired it?" The victims include persons who have lived in Portugal for years.

III

Money has poured into the nation for two years but, except for the taxi-drivers and the waiters, little of it has sifted down to the common people. The worker still gets about fifty cents a day; the ordinary policeman a few cents more. The maid who gets three or four dollars a month and her meals for working from dawn until midnight is considered fortunate. The streets are crowded with beggars, scrofulous children and the great, roving dispossessed. Now and then someone goes mad and is led off through the streets to the police station, ranting at the order of things. Syphilis is discussed as the common cold is talked about in America. Some attempts have been made to improve the situation but no marked gains are visible.

But if the general population has profited little from the last two years, a small number of Portuguese have been able to line their pockets richly. The gaming tables of the casinos are crowded and Portuguese predominate among the players. Gambling, however, is not alone the affair of the rich. Everyone gambles in Portugal. The biggest weekly event is the periodic lottery drawing with a first prize of about \$23,000. Everyone who

can scrape together a few escudos for a lottery ticket, or part of one, is a weekly customer. It is the single hope the average Portuguese has of getting rich. An intelligent native told me: "Gambling in Portugal is the opium of the people — but they need this opium." Other Portuguese feel that it is a curse, crippling the development of the country.

There is a tiredness about these people who are next door to the most terrible show on earth — an exhaustion in their speech, their motion and their morale. In occasional confidential moments they express their hope of an Allied victory. Here and there RAF buttons are worn surreptitiously. Many people, despite the government's official neutrality, have an almost mystic faith that somehow the United States will set things right. The American sailors stationed in the port were generally liked. American seamen get as much money as a Portuguese officer and this fact had its effect.

In higher circles, however, the United States is regarded with suspicion. Its wealth, its powers, its democracy cause uneasiness; the Portuguese inferiority complex is easily ruffled. As usual, the Germans have been most successful in dealing with this complex because

they have coupled soothing words with powerful gestures. Until recently, many military officers in Portugal took a German victory for granted and this attitude was adopted by the population. The Portuguese industrialist who took German lessons from a refugee "because Germany will soon rule the world" is not an exception. And then the Portuguese ape the Germans in their love of uniforms. Lisbon is filled with soldiers, sailors, policemen, Republican guards, Legionnaires and Youth members, wearing two dozen different costumes. But the Portuguese conscript, who can choose from only three sizes, makes a dilapidated figure whether he is on or off parade. He is paid fifty centavos (slightly more than two cents) a day and very often has been torn away from his family, since the conscription law does not recognize the common-law marriages which abound in Portugal. The conscript's morale is not inspiring and whether he is sent to the Azores or to Cape Verde, he goes cheerlessly.

There is no real gaiety in Lisbon. One rarely hears spontaneous singing or free laughter. Even in the movies and theatres jokes are passed off practically in silence. The chief recreation is café-sitting, which the Portuguese do by the

hour. Occasional bullfights, heralded as spectacular events of "daring, color and artistry," are dull affairs with a great deal of posturing and a minimum of action. Visitors are reminded frequently that, unlike the barbarous Spanish custom, the Portuguese never kill the bull. To this, a Spanish visitor once replied: "The Portuguese character is thus symbolized. They do not kill the bull, they merely bait it to distraction." But this is not entirely fair. The Portuguese possess both intelligence and kindness. Despite official disavowals, the basic temperament of the people is what might broadly be called liberal. They do not understand racial oppression and their sympathies are quickly aroused by the underdog. An index to Portuguese temperament is the fact that Spencer Tracy and Mickey Rooney are their favorite actors. History, however, has made them a tired people. They have not yet recaptured the energy expended in their mighty deeds and great military campaigns of centuries ago. It is this energy they lack, and not good will.

The war has been a stimulus to the country as a whole and in particular to Lisbon. The city is becoming modernized and progress generally moves faster now. New buildings go up; new roads are

built; new industries are planned. Last year, shoes were made compulsory for urban wear. A few weeks ago, after a national campaign, spitting in the streets was made a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine which increases by a third for each additional offense. As I write this, the streets are filled with proclamations announcing local elections and informing the heads of families — the only ones entitled

to vote — that it is their duty to vote and vote well. The candidates will be government men but an official explained to me: "First you teach the form, and then the essence. It is slow."

It was more than three centuries ago that the Portuguese discovered a large part of the world. By an ironic twist of history, a great war has led to the world's rediscovery of Portugal.



► *The movie publicity trade is as
bizarre as the town's reputation.*

HOLLYWOOD'S CLAMOR BOYS

ANONYMOUS

MY FRIEND Stutz was a Hollywood press agent. At any rate, he was called that on a studio payroll. His sole job, however, was to sample all female stock for an eminent male star. He investigated all prospective week-end and other companions of the star, checked their technical equipment, so to speak, and reported, orally and by document, to his employer. It was a delightful arrangement all around. Stutz, balding and plumpish, contrived to enjoy himself enormously, and the star, who trusted Stutz's taste, saved himself the wear and tear of experimentation.

Singular as this occupation may seem, it is far from strange in the world of Hollywood publicity. There is the case of the publicist whose job it was, for six years, to make and keep the world Greta Garbo conscious. He handled all her pictures and at such times as she wasn't working on an epic, he supervised her personal publicity. Yet in the six years he functioned thus, he spoke not a single word to Greta nor she to him.

On the set, he took a chair in a remote corner and remained there quietly. As a rule he succeeded in keeping out of sight, but there were luckless days when she would discover him, whereat a look of infinite distaste would cross her pale face. The publicist would then assemble his gear and meekly depart. Three times she had him sent home from remote locations. Ultimately there came that inevitable moment when even his remarkable resistance snapped. He was tip-toeing onto the set astern of her when she turned unexpectedly and spied him. At once she beckoned an assistant director. The publicist stopped short as the A. D. approached him. All the humiliation and injustice of six years burst the floodgates of his patience.

"You go back and tell her," he said grimly, "that I'm here to earn my living the same as she is and that I'm billybedamned well staying here."

He then wheeled and strode off the set, stage and lot. You might think that this was the end of the

feud but it wasn't. A week later the studio asked the publicist to resume his martyrdom at increased rates. It seems no other suffered so satisfactorily to the great Miss Garbo.

The average studio publicity staff is comprised of 3 per cent qualified newspapermen, 39 per cent graduate office boys, 48 per cent relatives of studio heads, and 7 per cent satellites of stars, as witness Stutz. The remaining 3 per cent exists through some mysterious power never revealed to me.

My early publicity experience in Hollywood was gained under a Mr. Tolliver. He was a very young man, known jocosely as Junior, who had spent much time developing an executive scowl and a species of double-talk. The first time I encountered him in the corridor, after my employment, I said, "Good morning, Mr. Tolliver," with all the affability at my command. Mr. Tolliver glared at me and walked on. A few minutes later I was summoned to the office of his assistant, who shall be Mr. Oftenoff here.

"Mr. Tolliver," said Mr. Oftenoff, "is a very busy man. When we shout at him in the corridors it disturbs his concentration. Besides, we don't speak to our superiors here unless they speak to us first."

Mr. Oftenoff then beckoned me grimly into an empty room, closing the door behind us. He turned upon me and said, hoarsely:

"Mr. Tolliver doesn't like the type of jacket you're wearing, either. It isn't formal enough for your position in the industry." He paused a moment, then continued, "We must be subdued, but dignified. We are not to speak to the players or executives unless spoken to. We must never tell them funny stories, but always laugh at theirs. We must never accept invitations to their homes, or invite them to ours. We must never drink with them or give any opinions of their work, except favorable ones, and then only if solicited. To be brief, we must always remember our place."

I said, "Yes."

One of the features of Mr. Tolliver's studio was its caste system. In a studio whose owners bellowed Americanism from the housetops and hired a fifty-thousand-dollar-a-year stooge to tell the world what great patriots they were, there existed a series of class distinctions that would make the East Indian social structure look like a Tammany clambake.

On the lot was maintained a private dining bungalow beyond the portals of which passed only

company officers, producers, the chief of production and the director of publicity. Next below that, and considerably removed geographically, came the Pastel Room in which directors, stars and executives without family connections ate, likewise the writers. No publicity man was permitted to enter there unless interviewing a star or entertaining a newspaperman. He might, however, eat in the main dining room with a white table cloth and the privilege of paying fifty cents for a luncheon costing thirty-five at a near-by counter. Here, also, the clerks, stenographers, assistant directors, still men, make-up artists, etc., were served, but the crew men, carpenters, grips and so on ate only at the lunch counter.

On one occasion, when I was new, I ate at the lunch counter. I wanted to save fifteen cents. When I returned to my office there was a slip on my desk instructing me to see Mr. Offenoff.

"You fellows are well paid," he said, "and you'll have to eat in the dining room if you want to work here. Mr. Tolliver won't have his men eating with the laborers."

The caste system extends, in a measure, to the publicity department itself. The director, of course, stands alone — a godling in spec-

tacles, conscious of his serfs only at such times as he sees fit to hire or fire. Next to him comes his assistant and after that the staff fans down to the inevitable and the incredible unit man. On the top step, next the throne, sit the "planters." To them is delegated the responsibility of meeting newspapermen and magazine writers and passing out grog and other fraternal stimulants (under the aegis of the director), the object being to soften up the victims for a major white space kill.

The exploitation men think up and follow through with the stunts (readily taking credit for those suggested by the unit men). One of Mr. Tolliver's exploitation men, to give you an idea, was the law suit specialist. His job it was to see that somebody sued the studio for something every thirty days. The technique was simple. All pictures made by Mr. Tolliver's studio have an actionable quotient, *i.e.*, a loophole whereby someone can bring a libel or plagiarism suit. Take the example of a picture made from the greatest work of a late writer of sea tales. The picture was complete and ready for the première when it was discovered, with some embarrassment, that nobody had sued over it.

So the suit specialist went to work. He found a thirsty bar fly

willing to act as the grandson of the villain of the book, a piratical sea captain. He brought action to halt the showing of the picture on the plea that it libeled the name of his ancestor. The suit went through the courts and made banner lines in all Los Angeles newspapers. An injunction was granted, but never enforced. A ten dollar bill and a flask of rum salved the spiritual wounds of the synthetic kin, but not until invaluable white space had been purloined.

II

Next after the sly exploitation men come the still-picture specialists. They are a somewhat static group, handling portraits and production shots for magazines and newspapers, as well as autographs. Each still department must be equipped with two or three gifted forgers whose job it is to sign the stars' names to fan photos.

At the bottom of the publicity barrel is the "unit man." All he has to do is write releases for his picture, cover all news that may develop on the set, invent stunts for the exploitation department, dress as if he were the top man on the studio payroll on a salary less than a journeyman electrician's, and see to it that everything the

public hears about his show is terrific.

He is seldom invited on studio junkets, except where his own picture is involved and then only after the director of publicity has approved his wardrobe and haircut. When a company goes on location everyone else is provided with transportation, but not the unit man. Nor may he use his own automobile to reach his post, since that would deprive a driver of an assignment and thus make the chauffeur's union unhappy. As a rule, he thumbs a ride to his job or finds a seat on an upturned milk case in the rear of the lunch truck, and then rides home with anyone who'll ask him.

The unit man in Mr. Tolliver's studio is required to keep his jacket on even in the middle of the Mojave desert in August. When the box lunches are passed around on location, he must wait until all players, directors, assistant directors, etc., have been served after which he may accept one but he must retire to some spot out of sight of the big shots.

One of the fascinating talents of the Mr. Tollivers is their naïve overestimation of the public stupidity. I once encountered a colleague wandering in a daze about the halls of my studio. He had just

come from Mr. Tolliver's office where he had been told that he was virtually obtaining money under false pretenses. It seems that he had failed in an upstate assignment to change the name of a town having the same tag as Mr. Tolliver's current cinemacutie girl friend to include the girl friend's first name. Thus, theoretically, the town was to be known not merely as Smith, but as Tilliesmith.

Sent to Smith on the assignment, the publicist, who shall be Finnegan here, was informed by the Smith citizenry that the community had been named for a wealthy, generous and useful clan of Smiths a hundred years before. The Smiths had given the settlement public lands, a library, at least one church and the site and original buildings of a college which had grown into the second largest of its type in the world. These things, however, seemed trivial to Mr. Tolliver compared to the honor of having the town bear the name of his adored and because Finnegan had failed to make the townspeople see this point, Mr. Tolliver, while not exactly angry, was terribly, terribly hurt.

On another occasion a youth who'd been the press agent for an important steamship line tottered out of Mr. Tolliver's reception

room. In an ill-advised moment he had harkened to the blandishments of Mr. Tolliver and arranged to turn over one of the line's finer vessels for a preview. The picture was to be shown invited guests as the craft plied between Los Angeles and San Francisco. The junket was a huge success. The guests couldn't have been drunker. The newspapers devoted columns to it, but with journalistic perversity insisted on printing the news, which was that a terrific epidemic of *mal de mer* had broken out aboard. A national picture magazine, fortuitously represented on the invitation list, added to the circulation of the intelligence with a series of lithographs featuring assorted posteriors against a background of white rail and Pacific Ocean.

Following this publicity, the steamship company received upward of two hundred reservation cancellations. Under the circumstances, there was nothing to do but liquidate the author of the embarrassment and this happened to be the press agent. Mr. Tolliver was deeply touched by the disaster, thoughtfully authorizing his No. 2 secretary to tell the victim so when he appeared in the outer office, mumbling something about the habit of eating. A publicist named Westcott was assigned by Mr. Tol-

liver to find a machine for testing a woman's allure. The idea was to convince a dubious public that a certain star, once celebrated for her sex appeal, had lost none of her pristine assets.

A surgical instrument house yielded an acceptable machine, one devised originally to test bodily heat reactions. Westcott alleged that he knew a surgeon in San Francisco who would accept the honor of inventing the gauge and Mr. Tolliver dispatched him to the Golden Gate. There it turned out that he had been a trifle sanguine. The surgeon said "No," very stiffly. A press association correspondent waggishly suggested that Westcott try a famous scientist from a near-by university celebrated for its ethical integrity. Westcott blandly called the noted educator and, probably because anything can happen in pictures, got a nibble. The scientist refused to accept the responsibility of inventing the device, but said that he would, in a lecture he was to deliver that night, state that such a machine was on hand and that he saw no reason why it shouldn't work.

Westcott attended the lecture with his machine. So did feature writers from all the district newspapers. After the educator had made his announcement, the re-

porters called for a demonstration and Westcott, posing as a doctor, obliged. The tests called for a subject to grasp a cylinder tightly in each hand and then view a photograph of a female *en déshabillé*. Electric wires conveyed his reactions to a needle and dial, allegedly registering the sex appeal in degrees from zero to one hundred.

Shown several studies of anonymous nudes, the subject's reactions were negligible. Then a shot of the fading star, draped in a diaphanous *robe de nuit*, was presented, but not until after Westcott had wiped the cylinders and the subject's hands carefully. To the astonishment of the beholders, and the subject, the needle spun to its apogee.

"There's the proof!" exclaimed Westcott, triumphantly.

There, indeed, was the proof. But of what? There was more to the needle's behavior than met the eye. The machine registered bodily heat through the perspiration developing in the palm of the hand. Any moisture caused the needle to climb. Westcott, while seeming to wipe the cylinder before showing the slipping siren's photograph, actually had wet his own thumb and drawn it chicanely across the convex surfaces. Incredible as it sounds, the stunt caught on. It made the newspapers throughout the coun-

try and even in recent months a national magazine carried a note about a famous scientist's psychometer and its tales of the manpower of certain movie players.

III

On another occasion, Mr. Tolliver's heart was enthralled by a very young and very beautiful player. She shall be Miss De Hydrate here. She had once matriculated at a Beauty Institute but beyond that her formal education had been somewhat sparse. It was Mr. Tolliver's idea that to disabuse the public mind of the idea that Miss De Hydrate was none too congested between the ears, she should be given a doctor's degree by some accredited women's college. Learning that Publicist Finnegan had a friend who was the press agent for what we shall call Plants College, in central California, Mr. Tolliver dispatched him to the Plants campus to arrange the honor.

Finnegan's progress to Plants was interrupted by a stopover at his own Alma Mater to attend a homecoming festival. There, in a guileless moment, he overshot his liquid capacity by a quart and when he awoke the following morning he was beset by appalling symptoms. He

set out by trolley for Plants, practically in the last throes of the dry heaves. At Plants he discovered that a special luncheon was being given for him and at each plate had been placed a minute tumbler filled with an amber fluid of nostalgic memory. Finnegan pushed his aside with an ill-concealed shudder.

"You aren't drinking?" The college president, a stately blonde, beamed approvingly.

"I really can't touch the stuff," said Finnegan.

Finnegan told the president that Miss De Hydrate had often wept bitterly over her inability to attend Plants college. The president, visibly affected, suggested that the school bestow the Pearl "P" on the actress, the highest honor ever conferred on Plants College graduates.

"It's too much to accept," said he. "You see, Miss De Hydrate would feel that any little gift she'd make Plants, such as a campus theater or something insignificant like that, would be much too small to ever repay you for such an honor as the Pearl 'P.' So why not something less lavish, like, perhaps, a doctorate of literature?"

Miss De Hydrate got her doctor's degree and today she is listed among the brilliant galaxy of honorees of an exclusive women's college.

On a rare holiday, a unit man from Mr. Tolliver's staff was socializing in a Beverly Hills *boîte*. A Hollywood character, long distinguished by his ladylike manner, entered in the company of an antique female commentator. "Ah," mused the unit man, "Lavender and Old Louse."

The following day the unit man faced Mr. Oftenoff. He was informed that it wasn't the policy of the department to make wisecracks in public about valuable studio contacts. "Besides," warned Mr. Oftenoff, "when you think up a gag like that you're supposed to give it to one of our players, not use it yourself."

It is upon this principle, as enunciated by Mr. Oftenoff, that virtually all the Hollywood reputations for wit have been built; in the fevered crania of unit men are spawned 99 per cent of the stars' wisecracks. There was to be a fire on a certain horse opera set. The unit man, in an inspired moment, suggested to Mr. Tolliver that an invitation be sent to Mayor La Guardia of New York, as the nation's No. 1 Fire Engine Chaser, to attend the conflagration as a guest of the studio.

"My gawd!" exclaimed Mr. Tolliver, "we can't do that. It wouldn't be dignified."

He then returned to composing a telegram to the United States Marine Authority in Washington requesting that all tugboats in American waters be brought to a halt, wherever they might be, at the exact moment the doors of a Tacoma theater opened on the world première of a Tolliver studio picture dealing with tugboats. The loutish government officials caused Mr. Tolliver to be terribly, terribly hurt again. The tugboats weren't halted.

In the equipment of all Hollywood unit men there are two unfailing white space grabbers, namely, ranches and romances. If all the ranches that have been purchased (in print) by distraught press agents for Hollywood stars were placed end to end, they would make a causeway to Tahiti and back *via* Honolulu. And if all the *solitaires* reportedly placed on maidenly fingers by palpitating players actually were bought, the Kimberly mines would work twenty-four-hour shifts the year round and there wouldn't be an unemployed lapidary from Johannesburg to Amsterdam. The unit man seldom consults the player involved. He simply notifies the press and lets the player read about it later. No star ever dares to deny these syntheses.

THE TRAVELING EXECUTIONER

By CRADDOCK GOINS

ABOUT a year ago a one-time road showman came out of the piney woods of South Mississippi to pick himself up a nice clean job, and now is very happy in his work. He is proud that he has a unique position in the country. It is his job to go around the state killing people at \$100 a head, which is all clean velvet. Mississippi taxpayers furnish him with a nice shiny truck and a portable death chair, all expenses paid, including the help of an assistant who, on occasions, has helped Jimmy from one bar-room to another after they have helped ease some poor punk out of this world's miseries.

Jimmy picked up the job of state executioner at a time when he needed a break, having just been pardoned after a stretch in the penitentiary for highway robbery. Jimmy, a forthright, sandy-haired, forty-five-year-old man, with friendly blue eyes, is not one to hide his gratitude. He tells you in a husky voice how proud he is that of the nine men he has electrocuted (up to this writing) five

who had the choice of the rope or his chair selected the chair.

He gets sort of choked up when he tells you about this. He says, "I told each one of 'em, 'Brother, I sho' appreciate your trade. I'm going to show my appreciation by giving you a nice clean job. I'm going to give you the prettiest death a guy can have.' You can't imagine how much that helps a poor peckerwood in the death chamber unless you have seen the grateful eyes these men turn upon me when they place themselves in my hands." Here Jimmy sighs and says, "I guess I just have a talent for this sort of thing. Condemned men seem to trust me, and I never let 'em down."

Mississippi became the only state to establish a portable death chair through peculiar circumstances. In the early 1930's, the hanging of Guy Fairley, white slayer of a federal agent, was badly bungled. Shocked citizens cried out for abolition of the grisly noose. For years, however, legal electrocution was blocked in the legisla-

ture by Sunflower County citizens for fear that their county, home of the state penitentiary farm, would be stigmatized as the "death county." In 1940, the legislature worked out a compromise calling for a special chair that could be carried from one county to another as required. Men already condemned were to have their own choice of the rope or the chair.

But even then the problem wasn't quite solved. Nobody had any portable electric chairs for sale. Nobody, in fact, knew how to go about making one. A Memphis firm finally agreed to try. The first victim was to have been a Negro murderer named Booker T. Childress. But there still was no death chair when his time to die came around. There was some fine hair-splitting talk about whether the state could hang a man who had been given the right to decide how he was to die. Governor Paul B. Johnson settled that by giving Childress a reprieve from time to time.

It was a happy day in Jimmy Thompson's life — September 13, 1940 — when he went to Memphis to inspect the chair and found it ready for his grim ministry. (Incidentally, it was a Friday the thirteenth.) Papers over the country gave Jimmy and his novel death

equipment good play. It suddenly dawned upon Mississippians that their state had a new distinction. Apparently officials got to reflecting that Mississippi, widely publicized for the highest homicide rate in the country, could use a little educational demonstration on the wages of sin. Anyhow, they decided to let Jimmy display his chair on the state capitol grounds a few days after the inspection.

Taxpayers thus learned that they hadn't invested in just a portable death chair; they had bought \$4000 worth of the weirdest rolling stock that ever streaked down their highways: a unit consisting of an auto truck, switchboard, death chair, generating equipment and 600 feet of cable to convey the "juice" from the truck to the county jails' death chambers. Spectators were quite as awe-struck by Jimmy as by his fantastic "killing machine," as some of them called it. Never one to hide his light under a bushel, Jimmy described his paraphernalia dramatically. He related all fearful details in that tangy, whangy, piney woods accent that for years had made him one of the most popular "doctors of hypnosis" on the backwoods road-show circuits.

Possibly Jimmy let his showmanship run away with him, or perhaps

it was because there were so many school children present. At any rate, there was public outcry against this demonstration of death on a curbstone-service basis. State editors denounced it as barbarous, much to the astonishment of officials who — be it explained in simple justice — had simply underestimated Jimmy's macabre descriptive talent in offering what they thought would be an innocent educational program. Kenneth Toler, staff correspondent for the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, summed up the spectators' shocked surprise: "Everything was exhibited but a victim."

It wasn't long before Jimmy had his first victim — "client," he called him. It wasn't Booker T. Childress; he was to come later. The victim was a little, sawed-off, tar-colored wife-killer named Willie Mae Bragg. He died on October 11 at Lucedale, Mississippi — "with tears in his eyes," Jimmy explained, "for the efficient care I took to give him a good clean burning."

Jimmy does not mean the word "burning" in a literal sense. It is just one of his trade terms, like "frying," for it is his proud boast that his "fry parties" are never marred by the sickening sight of sparks or the odor of scorching. He offers a highly technical descrip-

tion of how he treats the electrodes with salt solutions and fits them "very tight and snug" to make sure that the victim dies quickly and happily. His voice vibrates with professional pride as he discusses this phase of his art.

A short time after the Lucedale party Jimmy officiated at what he calls a "double-header," at Vicksburg. The victims were two Negroes who had robbed a white woman and killed a white man. "That was sho' easy money — two hundred smackers for just a few minutes of juicing," Jimmy recently reminisced. He made another twin killing on June 20, 1941, when two Negro boys, Theodore Green and Wilbur Sutton, took one-way rides in what Jimmy sometimes calls "my old shocking chair."

II

One might believe that it would be no more trouble to kill one man than another with electricity. But Jimmy has developed a theory that it takes more voltage to snuff out the life of a rapist than for ordinary criminals such as murderers, bandits and so on. He says that while others require "juicing" for only fifty seconds or so, he sometimes has to give a rapist the works for a full minute. Even then, in

one case, the state's medical examiner wouldn't pronounce the victim dead until he had received an extra jolt. Jimmy has no explanation as to why a rapist should cling to life more doggedly than others. He says, "It doesn't make any difference. He never knows anything about it after the first shot."

Three times Jimmy has performed before large crowds of most unappreciative guests. At Port Gibson, Decatur and West Point, Negroes from the countryside were lined up by the hundreds and "invited" to see Negro rapists die. Jimmy doesn't know who invited them. He only knows that most of them were there against their wishes — "probably to be reminded of the importance of good conduct," he thinks. "But," he adds proudly, "I did my best to give 'em a good show. One of them said I made him think of Boris Karloff."

Jimmy Thompson has had a speaking acquaintance with death for two-thirds of his life. He was born in the woods of Simpson County, Mississippi, on the fringe of a once notorious section known as Sullivan's Hollow, immortalized by "Wild Bill" Sullivan, "Hog Tom" Sullivan and other members of a turbulent family who used to

shoot up their own kin-folks when they ran short of enemies. When he was fifteen years old he ran away to join the Mississippi National Guard; he eventually saw service on the Mexican border. But his mother went to Federal Court to get him back home because he was under age.

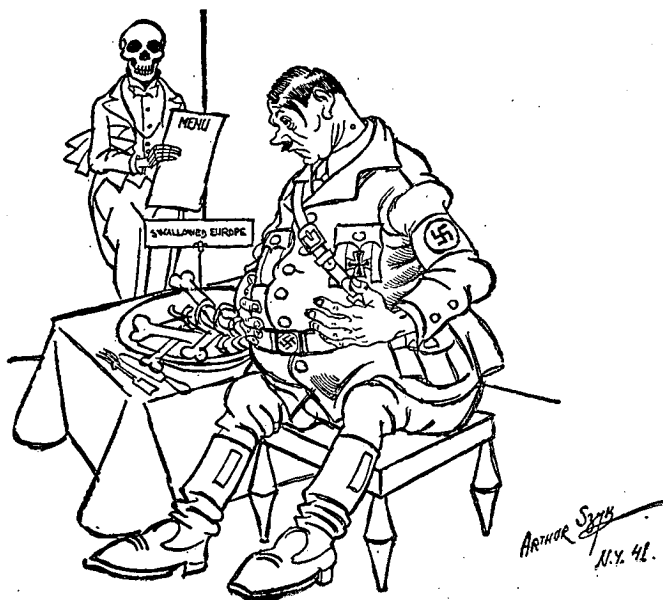
Then he hopped the fence one day when nobody was looking and joined the Navy. He finished that stretch just in time to enlist in the Second Division and get in the hottest part of the World War. He was with the Army of Occupation in Coblenz, Germany, when his mother appealed to a South Mississippi congressman named Paul B. Johnson, who got him furloughed home in 1919. Shortly after that, however, his restless feet took him to Nicaragua with Smedley Butler. Returning home, he heard about a neighbor who had been "talking nasty" to his mother. He met the offender in the road and shot him in the belly. The Southern people's traditional unwritten law — the right to shoot a man for your womenfolks — saved him from even being tried.

Jimmy then began going around the country putting on one-man shows. He started out as Dr. Alzedi Yogi, "world famous hypnotist." Later he called himself Dr.

Stingaree, and again he was Dr. Zogg. Friends know him as "a guy who'd get up any time of the night to do a friend a favor or shoot a guy's guts out." They explain his conviction for highway robbery by saying he was "taking the rap" for a young nephew, although he and the nephew and another person were sent to the penitentiary for a bold holdup. He was pardoned by Governor Hugh L. White in 1939.

When one asks Jimmy where he learned his specialized trade, he

speaks vaguely of states which employ anonymous executioners. But there is nothing vague in his talk about his present work. He likes it and wants everyone to know that he thinks he has the finest job in the world. He sho' appreciates all the business that comes his way — \$100 a head and all expenses. He also wants his friends to know he isn't drinking any more bad liquor. That practice has gotten him into trouble, on occasion. Now he's drinking only the best liquor that's sold.



THE THEATRE

BY GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

The People Versus The Playwrights

IN THE present painfully low state of the American dramatic theatre, it may be well to look into the matter of the playwrights, who are singly and solely to blame. The look, moreover, should be a sharp and uncompromising one, since the situation is critical and since nothing can be accomplished by the erstwhile politeness, with its off-spring of punctiliously phrased and largely meaningless essays that outdo the Leatherstocking Tales in bush-beating. If we are to get any distance at all, it is wiser to wear hobnailed shoes, not sneakers.

The plain facts seem to be these. With small exception, our operating playwrights have utterly no pride in the theatre and, in the few cases where they have it, have not the competence to make it count. The great majority have no honorable respect for the theatre, and none for themselves. Like so many movie cuties, they are simply out to get a flashy fame and the collateral easy money and they are perfectly willing to surrender their virtue, such as it is, to the

first plausible bidder. Outside of O'Neill, Sherwood, Behrman, Hellman, Anderson, Saroyan and maybe one or two others, the bulk of the men and women entrusted with supplying us with plays have none of them the integrity toward their job indicated by even a second-rate novelist, painter, composer, or ballet dancer. And even in instances where artistic integrity may exist, a personal pretentiousness, a rank lack of skill in dramaturgical enterprise, or an inferior but vain mentality often invalidates good intention.

As an example of the latter, take Maxwell Anderson. No man writing for our theatre has greater integrity and no man a higher goal. But none, also, is quite so personally pretentious, none of any standing is less skilled in the dramaturgical craft, and none, so far as the evidence presents itself, has a mind more critically incapable of meeting the demands it imposes upon itself. If it didn't take Mr. Anderson's latest play, *Candle In The Wind*, to prove all this to us

once again, Mr. Anderson brought up enough further prosecution witnesses in an address he recently made before Rutgers University to embarrass him clean out of court. In this address, Mr. Anderson rolled his august aim around on his tongue with sufficiently lush rhetoric richly to satisfy the students of Rutgers, aye, the students even of Tuskegee. But though the rest of us may similarly have relished the luxurious sound, what inspired it left us gasping for the fresh air of some scholarly pronouncement by Billy Rose. I content myself with a few illustrative examples of Mr. Anderson's self-critical dramaturgical processes.

"I did discover that there were rules of playwriting which could not be broken," stated Mr. Anderson emphatically. And then went on:

1. "The story of a play must be the story of what happens within the mind or heart of a man or woman. It cannot deal primarily with external events."

Required playgoing for Mr. Anderson: *Plague*, by Walter Haseclevier; . . . *one-third of a nation*, by Arthur Arent; etc.

2. "The story of a play must be a conflict — and specifically a conflict between the forces of good and evil within a single person."

Required playgoing for Mr. Anderson: *The Time of Your Life*, by William Saroyan, etc.

3. "The protagonist of a play must represent the forces of good and must win, or, if he has been evil, must yield to the forces of the good and know himself defeated."

Required playgoing for Mr. Anderson: the famous *Earth Spirit* of Frank Wedekind, etc.

4. "It might be possible to write a play in which the hero was evil and thought himself victorious — but the playwright would have to indicate that he did not agree."

Required playgoing for Mr. Anderson: The illustrious *Countess Julie* of Strindberg, etc.

5. "The protagonist of a play cannot be a perfect person. If he were he could not improve, *and he must come out at the end of the play a more admirable human being than he went in.*"

Required playgoing for Mr. Anderson: *The Man Who Came To Dinner*, by Kaufman and Hart, to say nothing of Mr. Anderson's and Laurence Stallings' *What Price Glory?*

6. "The protagonist of a play must be an exceptional person. . . . The man in the street simply will not do as the hero of a play. If a man be picked from the street . . . he must be so presented as to

epitomize qualities which the audience can admire. Or he must indicate how admirable human qualities can be wasted or perverted — must define an ideal by falling short of it, or become symbolic of a whole class of men who are blocked by circumstances from achieving excellence in their lives.”

Required playgoing for Mr. Anderson: Rutherford Mayne’s *Red Turf*; Lady Gregory’s *The Bogie Men*; etc.

7. “Excellence on stage is always moral excellence. A struggle on the part of a hero to better his material circumstances is of no interest in a play unless his character is somehow tried in the fire, and unless he comes out of his trial a better man.”

Required playgoing for Mr. Anderson: The celebrated *Business Is Business* of Octave Mirbeau, etc.

8. “The moral atmosphere of a play must be healthy. An audience will not endure the triumph of evil on the stage.”

Required playgoing for Mr. Anderson: the memorable *The Father* of Strindberg, etc.

9. “The plays that please most and run longest . . . are representative of human loyalty, courage, love that purges the soul, grief that ennobles.”

Required statistical study for Mr. Anderson: *Tobacco Road*,

Craig’s Wife, *The Bat*, *The Women*, *Ladies In Retirement*, *The Front Page*, etc., etc.

10. “Put on a play which sets out to prove that dishonesty is the best policy and vice is triumphant in human affairs, and the audience will refuse it coldly.”

Required playgoing for Mr. Anderson: The distinguished *Les Corbeaux* (*The Vultures*) of Henri Becque, etc.

11. “There is a place in the dramatic scheme for *The Beggar’s Opera*, in which the hero is a footpad, and for *Pal Joey*, in which the hero is a rat. But . . . the audience must know that he (the author) is fooling. . . . If he tries to be serious in such matters, no audience will follow him.”

Required instruction for Mr. Anderson: 1. *Robin Hood*; 2. The author of *Pal Joey*, he assures me, wasn’t fooling.

Let us now have an illustration of another playwriting class, to wit, the collaborators George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber. With the single exception of *The Royal Family*, a first-rate comedy, the past collaborations of the twain have been no more than shameless wooings of the box-office and their latest, *The Land Is Bright*, is still yet another. I use the adjective shame-

less because both writers are in the millionaire bracket, because both have no need of any further money, because at least one — and the more important of the two — Mr. Kaufman, has proved himself to be the possessor of a worthy and decent dramatic talent, and because both thus plainly reveal themselves as purely avaricious workers in the theatre. Nor are they the only ones. There are others who, if maybe to not so chock-a-block a degree, are similarly free from any need of mazuma and who yet continue disreputably to employ the theatre as a street-walker.

If a writer with no respect for himself and with just enough competence to get by sees fit to prostitute what small talent he has and use the stage to his own financial ends, that is his business, at least until the critics get busy on him. If a writer, whoever he may be, is destitute to the point of despair, let him write what trash he will, and, critics or no critics, good luck to him. But when a playwright with real talent and with more money than he can ever have use for (and who should have some respect for himself) deliberately helps to lower the estate of the theatre with cadging claptrap, that is another matter. And it calls only for critical contempt.

On the other hand, we have the writers with plenty of money but without any material talent who invade the theatre by way of regaining a little of the esteem for themselves which they have lost in Hollywood. These are not cheaters; they honestly try to write the best plays they can, and with financial reward either of no or of small consideration. But, though one can sympathize with them for their desire to retrieve respectability and to seek absolution for selling themselves to the movie junk-mills, they have no place in the theatre and only insult it with their presence.

We have already engaged a dozen such writers in the last few seasons and we are promised more in the weeks and months to come. Only recently we had two additional exhibits in the cases of one Norman Krasna, a big shot on the Hollywood dump, who had at us with a number called *The Man With Blond Hair*, and one Aubrey Noel Langley, a somewhat lesser shot, who had at us in turn with an item called *The Walrus And The Carpenter*. Poor Krasna thought to reinstate himself in good society with what he doubtless honestly believed to be a worthy play dealing with racial tolerance; instead it proved to be simply a badly written, dinky and quite entirely silly

screen melodrama. And poor Langley sought to elevate the tone of the stage and himself with what he evidently regarded as a tasty comedy of family eccentricities and what proved in turn to be rubbish suited best to one of the lesser summer barn theatres, if that.

II

I am afraid that at this point I shall have to use my good friend Sinclair Lewis as more or less typical of another horrible-example playwrighting class. Like some others who have made their marks as novelists — Steinbeck is the great exception and Heyward and Wilder are further exceptions — Lewis' attempts at playwrighting indicate very clearly that he looks upon the stage much as if it were the movie screen, and the movie screen of 1920 or thereabout at that. It isn't that he or the others like him are contemptuous of the theatre. Very, very far from it. Like the others, he apparently esteems the theatre highly and would give his bottom dollar to be able to fulfill its demands. But, also like the others, his theatrical mis-education has led him to regard the stage largely as the mere bean-blower of plots it once was, with the result that the plays he tries to write for it are of the pulp variety.

One would think that, in Lewis' case, he would have learned a lesson from his association with the late Sidney Howard, an experienced playwright, in the dramatic preparation of his own novel, *Dodsworth*. Howard's skill and sense were instrumental in transferring the novel to the stage with no loss of its sharp and true character delineation, no loss of its revelatory dialogue, and no loss of its literary content in favor of plot. But the lesson was not learned and Lewis' plays have accordingly been so radically inferior to his novels that it has been difficult to identify their author as the same man. This has been true even when he has taken on a helper, for those helpers have been similarly inexperienced in the ways of undefiled drama and have doubtless haplessly suffered from Lewis' insistence upon plot above all else.

Concluding notes on the general picture.

First, we engage the playwrights like Clifford Odets who, certainly not without talent, have come to be restless and impatient over the more critical public's failure to accept them at their own private high estimates of themselves and who seek, through a violent exposition of sex or something of the

sensational sort, to shock their audiences into a surprised hospitality. The result is a melodramatization of possibly more circumspect talents out of all countenance, and the conversion of possibly reputable careers into transiently startling and quickly evanescent mere Broadway moments.

Secondly, we observe the otherwise meritorious Sherwoods, Behrmans and the like foolishly surrendering themselves to the belief that, in times like these, only plays with political, sociological, racial, or chauvinistic messages are desirable, and turning out as a consequence plays that are little more than soapboxes full of grease paint. The ivory tower they regard as an unmentionable outhouse, fit for occupancy only by constipated poets, female short story writers, playwrights who dress for dinner, critics far beyond the draft age, and other such vermin. Yet that very ivory tower or something approaching it, let them reflect, gave to the theatre in the last war, and is again giving it in this one, plays considerably superior to those which have emanated from their own fiery battlements.

Consider these playwrights in the light of the present. Sherwood's topical *There Shall Be No Night* is surely no strict critical match for

either Saroyan's *The Time Of Your Life* or *The Beautiful People*, neither of which concerns itself with the immediate world's alarms. Behrman's *The Talley Method*, with its Nazi metaphors, surely does not compare in dramatic quality even with *Claudia*, which is a simple play about a young girl's adaptation to marriage. Rice's *Flight To The West*, bursting with anti-Nazi sentiments, is critically as inferior to his own pacific *Street Scene*, even to his own more pacific *The Left Bank*, as Anderson's *Candle In The Wind*, similarly bursting with anti-Nazi indignations, is to Anderson's own more tranquil *Saturday's Children*, *Elizabeth the Queen*, or *Mary of Scotland*. And Lillian Hellman's *Watch On The Rhine* can't compare in any really sound critical estimate with either Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes* or *The Children's Hour*.

Thirdly and finally, we have the potentially valuable young playwrights like William Bowers and the demonstrably valuable older ones like Vincent Lawrence betraying themselves as unable to take the stings of obtuse criticism and seeking cowardly refuge and balm in Hollywood. They should be ashamed. There is good stuff in them; they should fight it out; and the hell with the critics.

DOWN TO EARTH

By ALAN DEVOE

Meet the Muskrat

AROUND him is an impenetrable warm darkness. It is dark as only a place can be that is deep under the earth: a birthplace inside, so to speak, the womb of the planet. Here in this burrow there is such complete security and alienation from the bright clamorous Outside that there is nothing to give him any terror or uneasiness, no influence to mitigate at all his warm relaxedness and profound animal content. When he was born, not many days ago, he was blind, for such is the birth state of many animals. But even now, when his eyes have opened, pale and staring in his hairless little head, there is no startling shock of color or form for him to see (as a baby robin may see, for instance, the blue glare of the sky, or the green patternings of wind-shaken leaves), but only a darkness hardly less intense than the prenatal dark. Color and the movement of shapes will not come yet for several weeks as an experience in the baby muskrat's life and even when they do come, he will not be perfectly at ease with them,

and will all his life prefer the twilight and the moonlight to the brilliance of the day.

For the present now, in his birth nest, his universe is only scent and sound and a feeling of the warmth of a half dozen other infant muskrat bodies pressing against his own and permeating the whole dark hollow of the nest chamber with their comforting mammal heat. The scent ingredient that admixes with the warmth and the darkness is the scent of musk. It is in the baby muskrat's nostrils night and day, saturating all of his life experience. From the perineal glands of his mother it has emanated to pervade every cranny of the burrow, lingering rankly along the entrance tunnel that leads to it, staining with stench the infant's total body and all his world. Stronger than the body smell of any fox or weasel, the odor blends in the baby muskrat's dim consciousness with the darkness and the warmth, and with the curious soft and gentle sound that ceaselessly is in his ears. This sound is a singular one for a baby animal

to hear: not any land sound, like the crepitation of dry grass or the whistle of the wind in leafy branches, but a sound of water. It is a recurrent splashing and rippling, like the sound of little waves.

The twisting, slanting entrance tunnel that leads from the dark birth nest to the Otherwhere which the infant muskrat has not yet come to know, has its far mouth below the water level of a quiet brook. The sound that the baby hears is the sluicing of ripples in the tunnel's mouth, and periodically the louder water sounds that are made when his mother, gliding under water to the tunnel's mouth enters with dripping fur to make her way to the nest chamber and proffer her milky dugs. Darkness and water, the smell of musk and the fainter, subtler smell of sedge-roots and damp, green, growing things that cling to his mother's muzzle — these are the infant muskrat's awareness of his universe, and the cherished solaces around which all his life will be patterned.

The baby muskrat's fur grows quickly. The tiny, pink body of infancy is metamorphosed before many weeks have passed into a body very like a miniature of his mother's. It were not well if the muskrat's babyhood should be pro-

tracted, like the infancy, for instance, of a baby skunk in its convoluted root-lined burrow underneath the meadow grass. For the time of babyhood in muskrat life is a time of incessant danger. The birth nest in the brook bank, with its connecting tunnel to the water, is not a safe place for the tiny and defenseless. In the waters by the tunnel mouth, among the brook cress and the lily pads, great pickerel lurk; in the night time there may be prowling mink, sinuous enough and hungry enough to come creeping on stealthy feet along the tunnel; a fox, hunting the brook course for frogs, may find the muskrat den and set to digging.

And so, at an age when a baby skunk is still only a slumbrous infant, the young muskrat has been weaned from his mother's pungent milk to lily bulbs and the roots of grasses, having learned the lore of holding them in his forepaws as he nibbles them and he has grown a thick pelage of waterproof under fur and long, coarse, outer guard hairs. The laterally-flattened, muscular tail which will serve as his underwater rudder has grown to be six or seven inches long. He is ready to participate in muskrat adulthood. He is ready in some quiet dusk or moonlight now, in obedience to inner impulse, to move on

his broad, swimming-adapted feet — the hind ones even a little webbed — along the dark, downward-slanting tunnel toward the Otherworld. When he reaches the tunnel's end and finds water lapping there, he knows no uneasiness but only a fulfillment. All of his life, in the darkness, he has heard the water lap. It is his natural element, a part of his muskrathood like the love of darkness and of damp, green, growing things and the stench of musk. Agilely, instinctively, he slips into the water and glides from the brook bank into the flowing current and the congenial darkness of the outer-world night.

II

It is the adult pattern of the muskrat's life, as of all wild lives, to search for food, to breed and beget and have a lair, to participate after his fashion in the cooperative life of his kind, and to pass the long hours (when these concerns are not demanding) in exuberant play, or in that kind of quieter earth exultance which is a sort of compound of relaxedness and dim sub-dreaming. The muskrat's food getting is no absorbing concentration, as it is for a shrew or a wintering fox. In the dusk, in the moonlight, in the dim

dawn, the muskrat slips sleekly through the water, seeking and browsing. He likes the taste of nearly every kind of aquatic plant, the tender stems of the water grasses, the bulbous roots of lilies. If there are mussels available, he takes these, carrying them from the water to the shore, depositing them to dry upon the creek bank until the drying shall force the shells open. Every vegetation of the water and the oozy banks is food for him; any cool-skinned fish or frog or salamander is acceptable as variation.

Leisurely and quiet is the muskrat's feeding. He builds, sometimes, out of a plaiting of twigs and cat-tail stalks, a little feeding raft. Ensconced on this, while the dark current flows beneath him in the moonlight, he may browse and fish and nibble by the hour, dipping the morsels in the water, raccoon fashion, before eating them, ready to glide soundlessly into the cool, concealing depths if an owl should quaver or a red fox bark.

If, as the muskrat feeds, there should be others of his kind nearby, the suddenly realized presence of owl or fox does not send him gliding to safety in silence. He has no power to make an outcry — only a curious kind of little mumbling and chirruping which indeed he

often utters as he goes about his preoccupations — but he is possessed by the obscure cooperative impulse which pervades the lives of all wild things. He does not, therefore, glide soundlessly into the water as is his wont when solitary, but leaps upon it, flat-bellied, all four legs outstretched, with a resounding *thwack* that is as startling and sudden a sound in the darkness as the booming of a bittern. It is the muskrat way of uttering an urgent warning.

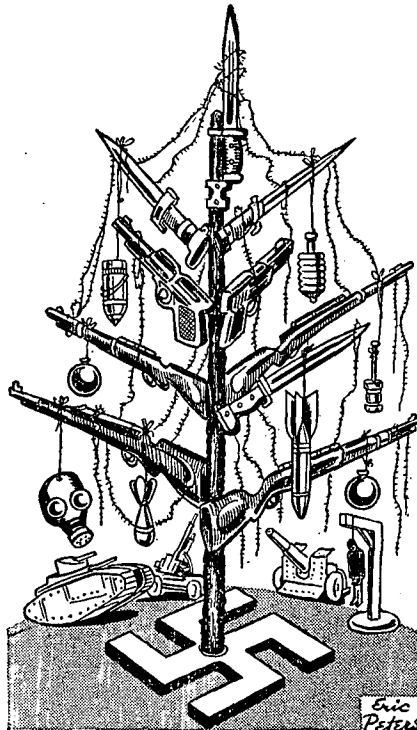
Feeding, diving, playing exultant water rigmaroles, preening and smoothing his thick, oil-coated fur, drowsing among the lily pads in dreamy half-awareness — these are the happenings of the muskrat's adult life pattern, and centrally, as persisting core of them all, is gradual preparation of the winter lodge. From early summer or even spring, soon after the beginning of adulthood, the muskrat is concerned in making his contribution to the building of that domed island of mud and water-soaked twigs and mounded rushes which is the muskrat's wintering place. Every now and again in the darkness — and with increasing concentration as summer deepens into fall and there begin to be tiny slivers of ice on the surface of the brook's quiet pools — he slips through the water

with tufts of grasses in his mouth, with little bundles of twigs and wet, withered leaves, and deposits them upon the growing heap that is slowly rising above the water surface in a sequestered part of the channel where the current is not too strong. Before the heavy snows come, the winter lodge has grown to be a compact, rounded mass, proof against any water current except the most tumultuous spring freshet. There is a tunnel into it at the bottom, underneath the water, and hollowed dark chambers in the dome where a muskrat can lie curled in a warm security, musk smelling and root smelling and murmurous with the sound of lapping water, as was the birth nest of his earliest experience.

When cold comes, the muskrat does not hibernate but only lessens his pattern of activity: swimming slowly beneath the ice now, browsing for grasses and for air bubbles to give him mammal-needed oxygen, retiring in the wintry sunrise to the dark chamber in his sheltering lodge. Restricted and withdrawn his spirit remains — his universe a gray, damp coldness; his life low-keyed in accommodation to the slow pulse of the wintering earth — until in April his blood obscurely quickens with the warmth of spring sun and he is led

at last to completion of the circle of his muskrat destiny: the lying with a warm, wet-furred female of his kind, the inauguration of new muskrat generations whose alle-

giant hearts will be given, as his has been, to the smells of roots and musk and dripping water plants, and to darkness, and to the lapping sound of flowing water.



THE LIBRARY

The Purification of Stalin

BY EUGENE LYONS

AMERICANS just now are pretty badly mixed up about Russia and Stalin and the unlovely system of so-called communism. The recent books on the subject are nicely calculated to deepen the confusion. They range from honest — because undisguised — Stalinist press agency by the ever-ecstatic Anna Louise Strong¹ to meandering double-talk by the amazing Walter Duranty.² A volume by our former ambassador to Moscow, Joseph E. Davies,³ is not yet available as this roundup is written, but a preview of one phase of it has been vouchsafed through a popular magazine.⁴

The American public had settled on a fairly consistent picture of Sovietism as another bleak and bloody variant of fascism, headed by a ruthless Georgian killer. There

were the Moscow-Berlin Pact and the periodic Nazi and Bolshevik assurances of mutual friendship to confirm the picture. If any doubts remained, our local comrades worked diligently to erase them, with their "peace mobilizations," White House picketing, defense industry tie-ups and gibberish about the imperialist war of the plutocracies. Suddenly came Hitler's lunge Eastward, all-out aid to Russia, a sort of official beatification of Pal Joey — and the "Russian enigma" is more mystifying than ever before to the average American.

That enigma, however, is less in Russia than in the American mind. The real mystery is why our public leaders and policy makers are not content to accept the windfall of the Russo-German war realistically: to give all possible aid as a matter of sheer expediency, without attempting the impossible job of whitewashing the Soviet dictatorship. Certainly the sudden ap-

¹ *THE SOVIETS EXPECTED IT*, by Anna Louise Strong. Dial, \$2.50.

² *THE KREMLIN AND THE PEOPLE*, by Walter Duranty. Reynal, Hitchcock, \$2.00.

³ *MISSION TO MOSCOW*, by Joseph E. Davies. Simon & Schuster.

⁴ *American Magazine*, December 1941.

preciation of Stalin and his statesmanlike butcheries cannot be due to gratitude on our part. Miss Strong blandly titles her book *The Soviets Expected It*. But there is overwhelming evidence that, expected or not, Stalin tried desperately to appease the Nazis.

I call on Harry Hopkins, our recent special emissary to Moscow, as witness. Mr. Hopkins has been putting the best possible face on the Russian business. In an excited essay about his thrilling meeting with the Georgian executioner,⁵ Mr. Hopkins reported such Moscow miracles as this: "He (Stalin) said good-bye once, just as once he said hello. And that was that." So we may hear him as a witness friendly to the great verbal purification of Stalin now under way here. In his essay he attested:

When Hitler invaded Russia he did so without a word to Stalin, not a hint. In Moscow, in the Kremlin, it aroused a hatred of Hitler that nothing but the death of the German Chancellor could lessen. As Stalin made clear to me, this was not a hatred of the German people nor of the German General Staff. The invasion was regarded in Moscow as the treachery of a partner who had suddenly revealed himself as a rabid dog.

He goes on to underline that Russia "has observed her commitments and treaties to the letter" in relation to Germany. Diplomati-

cally he avoids mentioning that it violated a whole array of treaties and commitments to Poland and Finland and the Baltic countries, but let that pass. The point is that Stalin's flaming indignation is not directed against Nazism as such, but against the "partner" who violated a compact. That hatred of Hitler is so intense that it sent a shiver down Mr. Hopkins' spine, but it is clearly of recent vintage, dating only from June 22, 1941. "Once we trusted this man —" he quotes Stalin as sputtering. Unwittingly, perhaps, our emissary has brought back a convincing picture of a falling-out between two gangsters that has exactly nothing to do with principles or democracy or national rights.

The current books on Russia for the most part labor to camouflage this falling-out as an ideological conflict. Their chief contention is that the Soviet-Nazi Pact, which touched off World War II, was a brilliant Stalinist maneuver in preparation for the eventual conflict with Hitler. Under this hypothesis, the Soviet territorial grabs are merely strategic deployments of forces to ward off Germany. Most miraculous of all, the shocking large-scale purges of 1935-38, in which literally tens of thousands were slaughtered, turn

⁵ *American Magazine*, December 1941.

out to be simply prophylactic blood-letting to cleanse Russia of Fifth Columnists!

II

Anna Louise Strong, of course, goes whole hog on all these neat interpretations. In a former book, she had explained that she is not interested in truth as such, but only in "the truth that is coming into existence." In the new volume, she goes at this unpleasant midwifery again with almost orgiastic relish. To prove that Stalin has been wrestling valiantly with Fifth Columnists, she even digs up the memory of the earlier batch of purge trials, 1928-32, all but one of which I reported for the American press. Those trials were transparently phoney, if not so bloody as the later exemplars, but Miss Strong counts on the short memories of her readers.

The excitable Maurice Hindus qualifies his enthusiasm with admissions about "the avalanche of sordid facts that has come out of Russia in the past five years" and hurried references to "the execution of hosts of leading men in industry, government, the party, agriculture, finance, commerce, the professions, and above all in the army." But he makes up for this

in generous measure by rehashing his familiar litany on the wonderfully new kind of Russians produced by this process of mass slaughter, pitiless oppression and mental regimentation.

In *Hitler Cannot Conquer Russia*,⁶ Mr. Hindus expands to book length the trite idea that a great people cannot be indefinitely held in subjection by invaders — that even though it is conquered, Russia will remain unconquered. He scarcely needed his mass of half-truths and sentimental exaggerations to prove the thesis that the huge, sprawling, long-suffering Russia will survive its new disasters as it survived old ones through the centuries.

The ebullient, cutely shocking Duranty, who writes as he winks, offers in *The Kremlin and the People* his well-known stew of facts and fiction, cynicisms and sentimentalities, from which anyone can fish out morsels to his private taste, including this reviewer. But the predominant flavor matches the present American mood; indeed, Mr. Duranty, who loves intellectual comfort, instinctively accommodates himself to the political fashions. On the convenient theory that Russia is a Dostoevskian phantasmagoria anyhow, he spares

⁶ Doubleday, Doran. \$2.00.

himself the exertion of making sense. Thus, for example, he demonstrates rather thoroughly that the show trials and the horrifying purges were a species of civil war, lunatic in its excesses:

The Purge did later become a sort of universal madness. . . . All the proceedings during this period were open to suspicion through the character of its then chief, Yagoda, who was himself afterwards shot as a traitor. . . . Yezhof, a bloodthirsty fanatic who slew by thousands where Yagoda had slain his dozens. . . . I witnessed enough quick killing in Spain to chill my heart-beats. But never such mass hysteria or frenzy of destruction as Russia showed to the world in the awful days of the purge. . . . Some competent observers place the killed as high as thirty or forty thousand, and the exiled at a million. One thing is certain, that from 60 to 70 per cent of the leaders in every field of Soviet activity were "purged" and of these at least one-third, and perhaps one-half, were shot. . . . The Purge did incalculable harm and set back the country's progress a full five years.

After which, just so, in a casual wisecrack, he concludes breezily that "in Russia they shot the Fifth Columnists."

Mr. Hindus sweats over the theory that the Russians have been magically transformed, that they are a new breed, severed from their mystic and muddy past. Mr. Duranty is too cool-headed to let himself in for such fevered wishful thinking. On the contrary, Dur-

anty's Russians are unconquerable for precisely the opposite reason — because they are the same old Slavs whom the Tartars and Napoleon and the British at Sevastopol confronted. As he puts it so cutely: "A cat is always a cat, although I do like Russians . . . and also like cats." In fact, whenever Duranty's loquacity gets him into a logical impasse, he shrugs his shoulders and explains in effect: "They're Russians, characters out of Dostoevsky, whether under Peter the Great or Pal Joey. . . . Why look for sense?"

III

Mr. Davies, in his monumental innocence, goes beyond Miss Strong, Hindus and Duranty in a complete and categorical whitewash of the purges. The generations that come after will puzzle over the great killing that wiped out a generation of communists and smeared the whole Russian Revolution as the handiwork of traitors, dupes and fratricidal maniacs. But our ex-ambassador has no doubts and no qualms in indicting the founders of the Soviet State — with the exception of Lenin and Stalin — and a million or so other Soviet citizens as Fifth Columnists for Hitler and the Mikado.

He explains that: "As a trained lawyer, not without experience in testing the credibility of witnesses in criminal trials, I watched the defendants' faces, studied their conduct on the stand, and I arrived at the conclusion that the state had unquestionably proved its case." Remarkably enough, he had kept his "conclusion" to himself until this particular moment when a lot of other people, too, have undertaken the great collective purification of Stalin.

As a trained lawyer, we must assume, he would hardly offer his blanket conviction of thirty or forty thousand Russians shot in the purges and a million more exiled, without careful and exhaustive investigation. Presumably his book will explain in detail why Stalin had so many Fifth Columnists to begin with; why Fifth Columning for Hitler had started as early as 1917; why the connivance with Germany and Japan, and in some instances with France and Britain, involved practically all the top-shelf leaders, generals, economic directors, artists. If he does so, he will scotch the suspicion that the Fifth Column may have been represented by Stalin and his associates, not by their multitude of victims.

I trust Mr. Davies' book will also

explain another curious phenomenon. He rightly regards the late Leon Trotsky as the central figure in the purges. There was a series of pertinent and significant allegations against Trotsky which were subject to a check-up *outside Stalin's realm* — and the strange part of it is that every one of those allegations turned out, on investigation, to be a lie. There were airplane flights in the "confessions" which demonstrably did not take place, meetings with Trotsky at times when he could not have been at the designated spot, and even an instance in which the spot itself had been demolished years before the supposed meeting.

What would become of testimony relating to episodes within Russia if an unimpeded check-up were also possible there? Moreover, why should a trained lawyer accept contradictory self-accusations unsupported by a scrap of documentary objective evidence when not only American law *but Soviet law as well* rejects such evidence? It will also be interesting to read Mr. Davies' comments on the detailed analysis of the Moscow trial records, supplemented by supporting testimony and documents, which resulted from investigations by an American Commission headed by Professor John

Dewey.⁷ After all, this purge of the Russian Revolution by Stalin is among the most significant events of our time. It has affected political thought the world over. From an ambassador to Moscow we expect on this vital matter nothing less than an airtight judgment.

IV

We turn now to other aspects of the great purification. The fine book by Lillian T. Mowrer, *Arrest and Exile*,⁸ provides a convenient starting point.

Mrs. Mowrer has told the true story of one Olga Kochanska, an American woman of Polish extraction who was overtaken in Poland by the war events. Mrs. Kochanska was one of the hundreds of thousands in the Polish, Rumanian and Baltic populations whom the Soviet authorities, after their forcible seizure of territories, drove out of their homes into horrible distant exiles.

Any reader will confirm that the story is recounted beautifully in a sensitive book. The sufferings of the heroine become a symbol of the larger tragedy of the uprooted hu-

manity in the invaded areas. More than that, the volume conveys a truthful and agonizing picture of Soviet Russia itself—the brutality, the poverty, the pervasive fears, the moral and physical ugliness of it all.

But an extraordinary thing happens. Having painted this picture in 270 pages, Mrs. Mowrer destroys it in the last two pages. I have never before seen such wilful vandalism visited by an author on her own work! A weak and futile apologia for the horrors described has been tacked on after Hitler invaded Russia. As if any act of the Nazis could automatically cancel out Mrs. Mowrer's truthful and deeply-felt book, and the Soviet terror of which it showed one minute facet!

Mrs. Mowrer quotes a verse out of Pushkin, the burden of which is that the Slav neighbors, Poles and Russians, are always fighting and no outsider can understand the family quarrel. But how about the Jews and Ukrainians, the Baltic peoples and the Finns, not Slavs at all, who have been mistreated no less grievously than Olga Kochanska? How about the millions of Russians even more terribly mistreated in purges and in concentration camps even more vile than the one Mrs. Kochanska tasted?

⁷ THE CASE AGAINST LEON TROTSKY and NOT GUILTY, Harper, 1938.

⁸ William Morrow. \$2.50

Arrest and Exile is eloquent proof that, Miss Strong notwithstanding, Stalin did *not* expect it. He counted on his "partner" to stick. Had he considered the territories which he grabbed from all his Western neighbors merely "borrowed" for strategic purposes, he decidedly would not have scattered their populations, overturned their local institutions, and integrated the areas with his Soviet empire. No matter how much the Durantys and Strongs may kid us on the subject, those were planned as permanent grabs. Strategically, they delayed Hitler's march by only a couple of weeks at most and decidedly were not worth the enmity of all those peoples, the lives invested in Finland and the good will of the rest of the world. Had the Kremlin looked upon Poles as potential allies in the "expected" showdown with Germany, Stalin would have kept them together, within easy reach; instead, they are scattered so far and wide that they cannot be mobilized again without the greatest difficulty.

These books, consequently, will not help anyone resolve the "Russian enigma." With the exception of Mrs. Mowrer's volume, before she kicks it into a pulp at the wind-up, they are interesting

chiefly as case studies in Stalinist apologetics.

The one thing least likely to occur to the puzzled average American is that the mental picture of Russia on which he had settled before June 22 remains substantially true, despite the new turn of affairs. Nations with different brands of capitalism or feudalism have fought it out for territory, natural resources or national glory. Why not nations with different brands of fascism or totalitarianism? The Russians died *en masse* in defense of their land against Napoleon's armies, against the British in the Crimean war, against the Japanese in the first decade of this century, against the Germans in the second decade. They did this, moreover, under a ferocious absolutist monarchy which they hated, as demonstrated by social upheavals and revolutions after each of these wars. Why, then, is there anything miraculous in the fact that they are dying wholesale once again in an elemental resistance against the latest invader, and doing it again under a ferociously absolutist régime for which they can have no special love?

There was a juncture when the Nazi war machine was poised to attack Fascist Italy. Had it happened, Churchill and Roosevelt,

and probably you and I, would have welcomed the new Italian front against Hitler. But it would scarcely have blotted out Mussolini's crimes and turned him into a benevolent old teddy-bear. Why should we be any less realistic about the Russian business?

No one denies that the German armies are fighting well and perish-

ing bravely, but we do not deduce from this fact that our healthy detestation of Hitler and his barbarian works is an awful mistake. There is no more reason to accept the obscene theories that the sacrifices of the Russian armies have miraculously cleansed the Soviet régime of its sins and sprouted wings on its boss executioner.



THE CHECK LIST

(Continued from page 5)

SARATOGA TRUNK, by Edna Ferber. \$2.50. *Doubleday, Doran*. A swashbuckling romance of the 'eighties played by Clint Maroon, the debonair Texan, and Clio DuLaine, the beautiful daughter of a New Orleans aristocrat and his French mistress. Clio, a Scarlett O'Hara at heart, descends on fashionable Saratoga like a whirlwind with her strange entourage of Negro maid and duenna and dwarf footman. Bart Van Steed, the weakling millionaire with the dominating mama is her legitimate prey, and Mrs. Bellop (Elsa Maxwell in disguise) helps her. Clint makes a fortune though, so Clio lets her heart rule her brain. Lots of fun, especially when at the age of ninety Clint becomes sentimental and gives back to America all that he stole from her.

WINDSWEPT, by Mary Ellen Chase. \$2.75. *Macmillan*. Windswept is the name of the house off the coast of Maine, which shelters three generations of the Marston family from 1881 to the present day. Sorrow comes into their lives, but never evil. It must be the effect of the good, clean, open spaces. Written with Miss Chase's usual competence and full of an appreciation for nature.

WILD IS THE RIVER, by Louis Bromfield. \$2.50. *Harper*. Romance in New Orleans during the Civil War, when the dymyankees were occupying the city. Major Tom Bedloe is torn between three women: La Lionne, a high class madam; the young Baroness de Lèche, a New Orleans aristocrat; and Agnes Wicks, his fiancée from Boston, who is more liberal than the usual run of such ladies. In the end, the great lover is left by one who has gotten all she can from him; deserted by another who falls in love with a better man; and shot by the third. Good escape literature.

SEASON'S GREETINGS, by Herbert Clyde Lewis. \$2.50. *Dial*. This is not the cheery little number that might be deduced from the title. It concerns five lonely people living in Mrs. Fanjoy's boarding house on Eighth Street in New York on Christmas Eve. Overwritten in spots, it belabors its point, yet it holds the reader's interest.

NON-FICTION

LIVING BIOGRAPHIES OF GREAT SCIENTISTS, by Henry Thomas and Dana Lee Thomas. \$1.98. *Garden City*. Brief and very readable sketches of the lives of Archimedes, Roger Bacon, Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Lavoisier, Dalton, Humboldt, Faraday, Darwin, Huxley, Agassiz, Mendel, Pasteur, Kelvin, Haeckel, Steinmetz, Marie Curie, Banting, and Einstein. There are illustrations by Gordon Ross.

ARMIES ON WHEELS, by S. L. A. Marshall. \$2.50. *Morrow*. Mr. Marshall reviews the significant battles of the present war since Dunkirk, drawing from them lessons for ourselves. He emphasizes the part industry plays in modern warfare and the extreme importance of protecting it from attack in time of conflict.

CIVILIANS MUST FIGHT, by Raymond Daniell. \$2.50. *Doubleday, Doran*. Mr. Daniell, chief of the London bureau of the *New York Times*, now on vacation in this country, here reports some of his experiences and observations. He has nothing new to say about the British war effort, but he writes pleasantly and with considerable persuasion about the folly of men like Senator Wheeler and Charles Lindbergh. "To me the argument of the isolationists seems utter, arrant nonsense." There is a preface by Somerset Maugham.

LINCOLN AND THE RADICALS, by T. Harry Williams. \$3.00. *University of Wisconsin*. This is perhaps the most detailed study of Lincoln's long struggle with the Jacobins within and without his party, a struggle he lost in the end when John Wilkes Booth's bullet hit him. Mr. Williams, who is assistant professor of history at Louisiana State University, writes with uncommon facility for an academician. A bibliography and an index are appended.

CHARLES de GAULLE, by Philippe Barrès. \$2.00. *Doubleday, Doran*. The first comprehensive account of the work of General de Gaulle and his free French movement, by the former editor of *Le Matin* and *Paris Soir*. M. Barrès writes simply and forcefully, especially when relating de Gaulle's futile struggles with the French politicians and general staff to see the value of the armored division, the idea of which he perfected, only to have the Germans lift it and use it to destroy France.

DOCTOR WOOD, *Modern Wizard of the Laboratory*, by William Seabrook. \$3.75. *Harcourt, Brace*. Professor Robert Williams Wood of the Johns Hopkins has won an international reputation for his researches in physical optics, which have done so much to advance the theory of atomic and molecular spectra. He is now in his seventies, but he continues his work with the same zest as when he started forty years ago. Mr. Seabrook's biography of him, unfortunately, is verbose, and occasionally, in fact, he writes like an intellectual Junior Leaguer. There are several illustrations and a bibliography of Dr. Wood's scientific publications.

GRAND STRATEGY, by H. A. Sargeant and Geoffrey West. \$2.00. *Crowell*. The authors define grand strategy as "the development of a human experience dependent at once on the heritage of nation and race, and also upon personality and personal reaction," and from that point of view they discuss the grand strategies of Napoleon, Wellington, Bismarck, Hitler, Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin.

THE ATLANTIC SYSTEM, by Forrest Davis. \$3.00. *Reynal & Hitchcock*. A detailed and heavily documented account of the diplomatic and naval relationships between the United States and Great Britain — "our natural, though not our formal ally," in the words of Admiral Mahan — from the earliest beginnings of the American Republic. Mr. Davis agrees with the admiral, with Henry Adams, and with all others who claim that the future of this country and of world peace is dependent upon the Atlantic being in control of the two English-speaking nations.

YOU PAY AND YOU PAY, by Maurice M. Goldman. \$2.50. *Howell, Soskin*. A thorough and lively exposé of such rackets as are practiced by many personal finance companies, easy payment schemes, collection agencies, nurses' registries, and investment counsellors. Mr. Goldman was formerly assistant to the Attorney General of Massachusetts, and has had considerable experience as an investigator of these rackets.

YOU TOO CAN HAVE A BABY (A Plan for Parenthood), by Abner Weisman, M.D. \$2.00. *Liveright*. After a short outline discussing conception and the birth cycle, Dr. Weisman disposes of the fears and phobias that clutter up the layman's mind in regard to the inability to conceive, and also discusses the newest advances science has made in regard to fertility. Clearly and simply written.

SUCCESS IN COURT, by Francis L. Wellman. \$3.50. *Macmillan*. One of the most successful trial lawyers of our day here relates his experiences in court with a view to helping the fledgling lawyer to make a name (and money) for himself without committing too many mistakes. Nine other lawyers offer the same advice. They are John W. Davis, Frederic R. Coudert, Floyd E. Thompson, Henry A. Uterhart, Joseph DuVivier, Martin W. Littleton, Emory R. Buckner, Luther Day, and Weymouth Kirkland. Professor Samuel Williston of the Harvard Law School contributes a brief foreword.

THE OPEN FORUM

CONCERNING DEMOCRACY

(In the November issue, the MERCURY printed an Open Forum letter from Edgar C. Riebe, of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, which questioned the soundness of "democratic ideology." We asked for an expression of views from other readers and the response was heavy. Herewith we offer a cross-section of the correspondence. — THE EDITORS.)

SIR: Mr. Riebe is of course entirely correct, and American, in his attack on democracy. He also uses the word in its correct sense, meaning majority rule. I applaud him heartily for this. The current use of the word "democracy" to mean everything from liberty to dictatorship comes largely from the communist campaign based on Lenin's instruction, "First confuse the vocabulary."

All the present jabber about democracy is totally meaningless, since no democracy exists in the world today and no one anywhere advocates establishing a democracy. But under cover of this now meaningless word, an increasingly successful effort is being made to destroy the basis of this Republic, which is individual liberty. . . .

Anyone who will read even a little history, even superficially, will not ask a question so absurd as, "Is the democratic idea sound?" No democracy has ever worked, and the reason is apparent from any of the many attempts to make it work.

The reason is this: Life-energy and its control are in the individual. That is not an idea; it is a fact. Every individual has inalienable liberty just as he has inalienable life; neither can be alienated from him, neither can be transferred to any other person. All energy, including living energy, is by its nature self-controlling. Because self-control cannot be separated from energy, every living person is self-controlling.

He is not a controlled unit in a larger whole, like a cell in a body, as worshippers of pagan gods believe. (Including communists, Nazis,

fascists, who name their gods Economic Determinism, Historical Necessity, Race, The State.) The fact is that each human being is a dynamo generating energy that is self-controlling; he is self-governing; that is, he is free and responsible. When, in order to escape responsibility, a man tries to escape from his freedom, he can only obey an authority that does not in fact exist, an authority that is a false image in his own mind.

Therefore, when a large number of people believe that such an authority exists, they must either obey, like savages, an intangible tabu, or they must submit to some living man. When they vote, they will choose this man . . . because at the moment some common passion or interest sways a majority. And because a majority obeys him, nothing checks this man's power to destroy the few men who do not submit to him. The demagogue therefore quickly becomes a tyrant, and that is the swift and violent end of the democracy. This has always occurred whenever majority rule has been tried. . . .

The sound and scientific idea, based on facts, is the idea of the American revolution for human rights.

ROSE WILDER LANE

Danbury,
Connecticut.

SIR: One of the prime reasons why democracy does not function in a large group is that many citizens do not know their rights, and education is largely controlled by factions. Many persons are too lazy and indifferent

to exercise their right — or even to perform their duties; therein lies the greatest strain on the practice of democracy as a workable institution. Humanity is not uniformly concerned nor has everyone the requisite foresight — or intelligence — to interest himself in something from which he cannot derive immediate, tangible and substantial benefit.

So individuals are poor democrats, and groups incline toward "corporate bodies." In times of peace and plenty, states become negligent of their interests, delegating their powers and privileges to intriguing politicians. When this procedure brings them to the brink of disaster, the mass rouses into a sluggish and bewildered protest, only to find that its several rights have been kneaded into a centralized government.

But mankind has come a long road from his jungle lair. And something he has made to work partially and spasmodically can grow into larger proportions. To question the soundness of an idea and discard it summarily because it is not to the liking of a few proves nothing. However, it probably will be a long time before humanity will be capable of putting pure democracy into practice, for it will take a great deal of imagination, and far more altruism than is general. In the meantime, we shall continue to have militarists, opportunists, strategists and just plain mercenaries in the saddle — those who maintain the status quo, or change it, by using the passive aggregate.

MAY GARDINER GUERARD

*Oroville,
California.*

SIR: I agree with Mr. Riebe. He strikes the nail on the head. Democracy today exists in theory only. And where an attempt is made to put its fantastic doctrines into practice — there lies degradation, poltroonery and hypocrisy. The ruling classes of the so-called democratic countries everywhere have actually to get into power by flattering and lying to their peoples. The superior have to kiss the bootlaces of the inferior that they may be permitted to lead them! . . . De-

mocracy to me is only a modern example of the old adage about too many cooks spoiling the broth.

Unlike Mr. Riebe, I have little hope that the coming peace will shift the balance of power to the more enlightened members of the various communities. Under industrialism, power must gravitate to the money-makers, *i. e.*, to people who have a talent for making money, *i. e.*, the men out of the mob. The all-around superior type of human being today has small talent for acquiring power under present circumstances. It demands too much of him. He must stoop to practices that will lower him. He can't touch government without soiling himself.

Until our universities can evolve a system of education capable of producing men who will be truly civilized (in the Platonic sense) and still able to beat the plutocrats at their own game — until then our Ideal Community must remain only an ideal. In any case — to hell with Hitlerism.

JOSEPH FINNAMORE

*Carberry,
Manitoba, Canada.*

SIR: The evolution of big and little dictators as leaders of big and little groups of the populace was clearly foreseen by the framers of our constitution. Though most ordinary citizens might be quite unqualified to decide, or even to judge national or international questions, they may vote for men whom they would like to have represent them. Thus we were intended to be a representative republic and this is a most fortunate circumstance. For the loose notion that any citizen, merely by virtue of singing the first stanza of the national anthem, signing his name and reading the preamble to the constitution is qualified to be president or hold any other important office is too silly for serious consideration.

E. V. WILCOX

*Chevy Chase,
Maryland.*

SIR: "Democratic ideology" is just as sound as its foundation. As it exists today, we

find that our impetuosity has led us to attempt an angel food cake with only corn bread ingredients. We are kindergartners trying to use college textbooks. . . . A period of iconoclasm would at least clear the way for a new and sounder foundation.

GLADYS ELLIOTT

*Bay City,
Michigan.*

SIR: Must we be satisfied with the "baby kissers" and "back slappers" forever? Why could not an amendment to the Constitution be passed where: "Every candidate for public office shall appear before a board of examiners at his State university, and shall take an examination on those subjects necessary for him to know in order to conduct the affairs of that office efficiently?" After all, we do this with doctors and dentists and lawyers and chiropractors. . . . Are public affairs less important?

ROLF ALEXANDER, M.D.

*Warm Springs,
Nevada.*

SIR: I have as yet to hear of anyone justly proving that our way of governing is not an ideological one or other than a basically sound one. . . . Your correspondent fails to make a comparative analysis of democratic ideology with whatever form of government that obsessed him to so deride our way of governing. . . . For some reason or other, God, in his wisdom, endowed the average man with an unexplainable inherent intelligence of distinguishing right from wrong, which very often is lacking in so-called intellectuals, and so democracy gives the average man the right to exercise his will over the intellectual when found wanting!

L. H. ROTH

*Montgomery,
Alabama.*

SIR: . . . Where democratic ideology shines even now is not its perfect reflection of popular will — which might not be entirely desirable yet, anyway — but in its disregard

of all factors except biological and ethical ones — physical beauty, health, intelligence, "goodness" — in its evaluation of human worth. There are no hereditary best people, no superior and inferior races. "All men are created equal." The United States Americans were, I believe, the first, and perhaps the only, people to try this somewhat hyperbolic statement of a scientific truth on a large scale, and I think the results, though not perfect, speak for themselves.

CARL CARLSEN

*Willow River,
British Columbia, Canada.*

UNION NOW WITH GERMANY

SIR: Allow me to congratulate you for publishing such a timely article as "Union Now With Germany," by Prince Hubertus zu Loewenstein. To me, his idea is the first sane one to have come out of this mess, the first opportunity for both isolationists and interventionists to agree upon a plan and a course of action. Interventionists cannot call it appeasement, neither can isolationists call it intervention in any military sense. Surely it is better to give the German people a chance to oust Hitler themselves, surely some sort of a compromised peace would be a more lasting and just one. And I do not consider the plan wishful thinking but rather a very realistic approach to what we Americans claim we desire, namely, peace on earth, good will to men.

BERT DECKER

*Clark's Summit,
Pennsylvania.*

SIR: Am very much shocked by your article . . . in the light of your past editorial policy. The article has the broad assumption that there is such a thing as a decent German, while the record proves there are none in existence.

Would not a few thousand Germans planted in East Africa have a fine time plotting against the peace and welfare of their neighbors. All this mention of Hitler leaves me cold as all the facts prove that the present mess was started by the German people

November 11, 1918. He (Hitler) just seized the drum major's baton. The German accomplishment in the Russian war proves that the three hundred million Germans in Europe are united in loving to be soldiers or in working for soldiers. One must however acknowledge that the Germans have something that the rest of us have not got; a people who can live on lies, financial and commercial swindling for over twenty years and at the end of that time still find people crazy to do business with them are some people.

A. L. PUTNAM

*Arcata,
California.*

SIR: I have read the article written by Prince Loewenstein, but I am sorry to tell you that I don't see any promising aspect of this plan. I am afraid that nothing could be more agreeable to Mr. Goebbels or could fit in better with his propaganda than the carrying out of such or similar plans. Throughout history, emigrants count for little in their own countries, unless they have had to leave their countries because of foreign oppression. History provides ample justification for this point of view of mine.

HEINRICH BRÜNING

*Cambridge,
Massachusetts.*

SIR: So far as they are really democratic, German-American, German-African, and German-Asiatic organizations should urge their democratic or republican governments to accept the wise and constructive idea of a "Free State Germany" and to support the efforts of those who will try to realize it.

L. C.

*Allentown,
Pennsylvania.*

SIR: The goal envisaged by Prince Hubertus zu Loewenstein is without question plausible, and were there the slightest chance of making it work, I would have been the last man on earth to raise my voice against it. But I know the German people. Sixteen years ago, I

argued with an American communist whom I happened to meet in Berlin that the Soviet Union would be foolish in depending upon the German communists. That there is no such thing as a German with an international point of view. Germans, even the socialists during the Kaiser days, at international gatherings openly expressed their superiority to all other people and workers. . . .

For proof we need only turn to the powerful socialist and communist forces which had existed the day Hitler took power. Where are the eight million socialists and the six million communists in Germany? They are in the ranks of the invaders and in the factories preparing the destructive machinery for the destruction of all peoples who won't bow to the German barbarism. They will never revolt of their own accord. They now hold weapons in their hands, and could do something about it. But they won't. They have never learned how to think for themselves. They have been trained in the same manner as we train wild beasts, but they can no more act independently than the same wild beasts.

Compulsory labor for Germany's millions for decades to come, plus an educational system for as many decades, supervised by the combined democratic forces of the world might produce in Germany in the course of a few generations, a new breed of human beings, more attuned to the world outside the German borders, more sympathetic, more humane.

J. ANTHONY MARCUS

Washington, D. C.

SIR: . . . I recommend that the government appropriate immediately several billions for the establishment of a German State on the planet Mars where the free Germans could freely entertain themselves for some years as gods of the natives of that famous planet — if natives there be. It would be some time before Germany could get around to conquering that part of the universe. I urge early Congressional consideration of this suggestion.

H. C. CURRIE

*Austin,
Texas.*

DISPOSING OF THE GERMANS

SIR: Harrison V. Trentwell of New York asks the pertinent question: What to do with the Germans after the war is won? I dislike his phrase "after the peace is signed," because that would indicate that we learned nothing from our experience after the last war. The great mistake then, above all others, was to leave Germany a sovereign state. After victory I would favor humane treatment of the German people at large . . . but only on condition that Germany as an independent, sovereign state shall cease to exist. . . . The Germans will be promised eventual citizenship in the Federal Union (the realization of Union Now — ED.) after a period of reconstruction. . . . It may take ten years to eradicate the Nazi virus, but when this has been done, the Germans should be given a chance to demonstrate their ability to establish and maintain civilized government. . . .

CLARENCE HOTSON

Dorchester, Massachusetts.

SIR: What to do with the Germans after peace is signed: Answer: Do not worry about it: Peace will be dictated by the Germans and they certainly will not need any advice from fools as to what to do with themselves after England lost their war.

H. BRATTAN

Los Angeles, California.

SIR: . . . Would it not be a simple solution to the war problem to simply stop the mass production of babies? If Germany had only umpteen millions of citizens instead of umpteen millions of citizens, could she not more readily take care of them at home? May I ask . . . is it better to reduce the overcrowding population by methods now being used on Russian battlefronts? Is slaughter and carnage preferable to a druggist's prescription? Is freezing, starving and bleeding better for young men than the sweet peace of non-existence? . . . If these people had never been born, they would not now be suffering. They would not now be in the business of striking terror to the hearts of simple, peace-

loving people everywhere in Europe. . . . The answer I must give . . . is this: Force education upon the German People and make them understand that there is not room in this world for umpteen billions of their descendants and that they must not reproduce so rapidly. I would suggest at the same time that the rest of the human race should be educated along the same lines.

BLAINE BURTON

Hampton, Virginia.

WOMEN AS TIME BOMBS

SIR: No doubt the Sartain article in your November number is quite correct in the view that the Women Own America, but as yet do not know it, and so presumably never will. BUT — what about When They Find Out? Every year adds to the already large snowball of their holdings; every year a little more suspicion of their potential power seeps in. There's many a "Village Hampden" of the other sex just waiting. . . . As well expect them to pass up such a situation permanently as to suppose that, once we get a new, shiny Navy, someone will not be disposed to use it. Don't be deceived, Brother, by the fact that they happen to be still going up another street; they can turn on a thin dime, when the time comes.

MAYNARD D. FOLLIN

Detroit, Michigan.

MR. DE VALERA'S IRISH

SIR: In your very interesting report on Ireland there were some mistakes: there is one I should like to clear up. Your reporter misunderstood Prime Minister de Valera's conversations on the telephone. Mr. de Valera is a fluent Irish speaker, and what your correspondent thought were exclamations used to stall off people who were speaking to him in Irish — Ha — ha — were really the Irish form for "yes" or "that is so," roughly the English correspondent is "sha."

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Music for the Morning After New Year's

THE CHEERFUL note in giving records for Christmas is this: scarcely anyone has everything, or possesses more than a representative sampling of the vast recorded music library. The problem is only to find out what your collecting friend doesn't own. And for those who read these notes after the holidays, it may be added that music solaces the heart bowed down by January bills and the impending day of reckoning with the Department of Internal Revenue.

An escapist item ideal for both pre- and post-holiday escapists is Victor's album M-836 (\$4.50) which might be titled "Inside Edna St. Vincent Millay." In it, Miss Millay reads eighteen of her poems, a fair cross-section of her work. She reads much better than most poets do and the result is soothing.

Note to Tin Pan Alley: Lay off Tchaikowsky awhile and try César Franck. He wrote some good tunes, too. Some of the best are in his *Symphony in D Minor*, which this month gets two new pressings. Victor's is played by the San Francisco Symphony, under Pierre Monteux (M-840, \$5.50); Columbia's is done by Sir Thomas Beecham and the London Philharmonic (M-479, \$5.50). Monteux's version is the better recording job, Beecham's excels in interpretation and performance.

Other symphonies offered currently include Schumann's Fourth, an excellent reading by Bruno Walter and the London Symphony (Victor, M-837, \$3.50); and Gliere's Third, not important music but still masterfully performed by Stokowski and the Philadelphians (Victor, M-840, \$6.50).

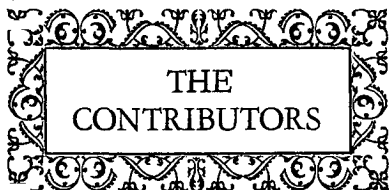
Choice orchestral items on the lists include: "Strauss Waltzes," played by Andre Kostelanetz and his Orchestra (Columbia, M-481, \$3.50); a Grade-A performance of Smetana's

tone poem, *The Moldau*, by Walter and the New York Philharmonic (Columbia, X-211, \$2.50); a much-needed modern recording of Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel* (Columbia, X-210, \$2.50); Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* in E flat major, done with fine artistry by Albert Spalding, William Primrose and the New Friends of Music Orchestra under Fritz Stiedry (Victor, M-838, \$4.50); and Harl McDonald's charming suite *From Childhood* with the composer directing the Philadelphia Orchestra and Edna Phillips as harp soloist (Victor, M-839, \$3.50).

Voice lovers will discover a real holiday in the Victor list. There is Fauré's *Requiem* (sung in Latin) and Mozart's *Ave Verum Corpus*, done up in one album by the Montreal Festivals Orchestra, under Wilfred Pelletier, with Mack Harrell and Marcelle Denya as soloists (M-844, \$5.50). Jan Peerce, Arthur Kent, and the Victor Symphony and chorus offer music from Scene III, Act III of Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* (M-845, \$2.50). Richard Crooks' art is displayed in an album which includes a dozen songs (M-846, \$4.25). And, although it was offered as a special Christmas release, there is superlative year-round listening in an album which contains excerpts from Handel's *Messiah*, Mendelssohn's *St. Paul* and *Elijah*, and Bach's *St. John Passion*, all of them sung by Marian Anderson, with the Victor Symphony under Charles O'Connell.

Recommended singles this month include these from Columbia's list: Ernst Toch's delightful "Pinocchio" overture, played by Frederick Stock and the Chicago Symphony; the Don Cossack Chorus in "Recollections of Tchaikowsky"; and Bruna Castagna's voicing of arias from *La Gioconda* and *Don Carlos*.

— JOHN TEBBEL



THE CONTRIBUTORS

A VIOLENTLY anti-Semitic pamphlet given to him three years ago by a New Jersey school-teacher set JOHN ROY CARLSON, newspaper and magazine writer, off on a personal examination of Nazi-fascist propaganda and movements in America. He trailed the pamphlet to its publishers, a Nazi propaganda group operating at night in the rear of a New York barber shop. For the next few months, he attended pro-Nazi meetings as an interested spectator until he realized one day the sinister national significance of the movement he had stumbled upon. Since October 1938, he has been studying Nazi-fascist activity at first hand.

HENRY F. PRINGLE, Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer and contributor to numerous publications, says he is at work on a new book, "which is partly biographical and partly not." He adds: "My principal interest, right now, is the war and I'm afraid that I'm a war-monger."

HENRY TORRÈS, noted French criminal lawyer who now lives in America, is the author of a recent book about Pierre Laval. He contributed "The Coming French Revolution" to a recent issue of the *MERCURY*

WALDO FRANK is living in Truro, on Cape Cod, at present working on a novel. His latest work of fiction is *Summer Never Ends*. He writes: "Truro is as gloriously beautiful as ever; although daily one hears the big guns boom at the other end of the Cape, in Camp Edwards."

A New Yorker who lives in Hollywood, MORT BRAUS switched from law to writing and co-authored several movies, best-known of which is "Three Loves Has Nancy." For the last

(Continued on page 127)

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two years, he has concentrated on writing a long historical novel, "with a libertarian theme."

THE AUTHOR of "Hollywood's Clamor Boys" remains anonymous for obvious reasons. He was recently graduated from Hollywood press agent to scenarist.

DELLA T. LUTES is a Michigan writer who has absorbed the pioneer folklore and customs of the middle west and transmits them to nostalgic readers in the form of delightful books and articles.

WINTHROP SARGEANT, a well-known music writer, recently contributed "The Sterility of Modern Music" to the MERCURY.

S. L. SOLON, New York free lance writer, is in Lisbon, studying that hectic city. He intends to go to London soon.

CRADDOCK GOINS, a Mississippi newspaperman, has been a frequent contributor to the MERCURY and other magazines.

SHOP TALK: The *Dance Observer*, a New York magazine, chastises Winthrop Sargeant for writing, and Olin Downes for approving, *The Sterility of Modern Music*, which appeared in the September MERCURY. They are, says the *Observer*, "mistaking their own incapacity to grow with the times, to find the essential connection between modern music and modern life, for a defect in the music itself." Mr. Sargeant defends the opera in this issue. . . .

Coming MERCURY events include: A brilliant article by Max Eastman analyzing the disease of amorism which has afflicted a portion of America's intellectuals. It is a plea for an ethical approach to our problems—a respect for the basic decencies of human existence. . . . Also, a discussion of the Negro problem by Edwin R. Embree, president of the Julius Rosenwald Fund; an analysis of murderers, by Lewis E. Lawes, former warden of Sing Sing; Ernest L. Meyer's reminiscences of his father's Milwaukee German newspaper; an examination of the jury system by Harry Elmer Barnes; the story of New York's first murder mystery as related by Robert W. Sneddon; Isabel Currier's short story, *I've Been Working On the Railroad*; and another excerpt from Herbert Asbury's informal history of the Pennsylvania oil fields, this one about Coal Oil Johnny.

J. T.



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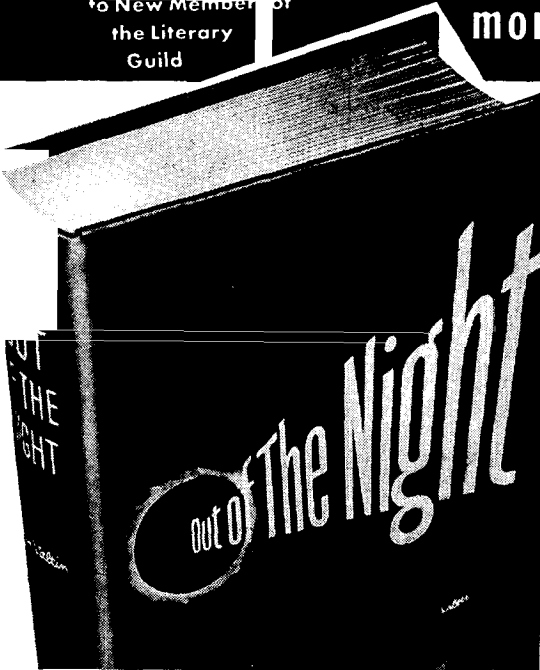
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